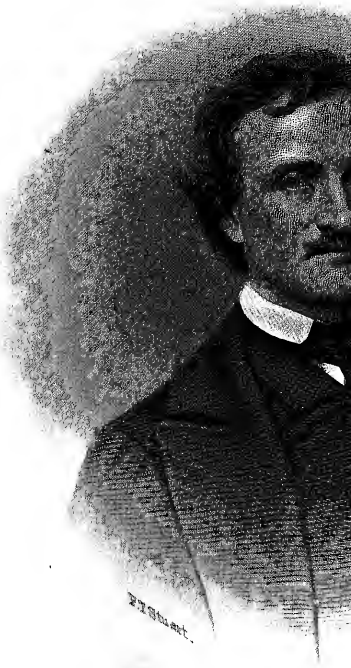


Edgar A

American Men of Lette

EDGAR ALLAN I

BY

GEORGE E. WOODBERR

THIRD EDITION.



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THE END OF THE PLAY . . . . .



PREFACE.

THE principal printed sources f
Poe's life are the following, of
three were inspired by himself
before his death: I., Griswold's
Poets and Poetry of America," 18
sketch, in the Philadelphia "Satu
1843; III., Lowell's sketch, in "
zine," 1845; IV., Griswold's "Mem
the documents put into his hands a
and prefixed to the third volume
edition of Poe's "Works," 1850, but
V., Mrs. Whitman's "Edgar Poe
1860; VI., Didier's "Life," prefixed
Poe's "Poems," 1876; VII., Gill
VIII., Stoddard's "Life," prefixed
lections from the "Works," 1880, a
in the latest complete edition (A.
Son, 1884, 6 vols.); IX., Ingram's "
1880. These authorities, each of

original matter peculiar to itself,
personal reminiscences of Poe in
newspapers, have been used in the
the present biography. The staten
these sources are extraordinarily co
ful, and contested; and in view of
of the spirit of rancor excited in ar
Poe's character, the author has mad
was possible, a documentary biogr
fied all facts positively stated at
has felt obliged to assign the autl
in any questionable assertions, in fc
method, which seemed the only pr
truth was to be arrived at, has ir
direct obligation to previous wor
otherwise have been the case; but
this matter has been treated with n
and he takes pleasure in thanking
Didier and W. Fearing Gill, Esq.,
offering to him the use of their
Messrs. A. C. Armstrong & Son,
the copyright of the Griswold
memoirs, for permission to extrac
found in the text. To Mr. Gill he
for the use of the incomplete MS. "
Clarke, once Poe's partn r. To

work the present biography is unde
the foot notes exhibit, especially fo
briefest possible) from Poe's corre
women. The letters designated "
and accredited to Ingram's "Life"
been previously printed, were placed
disposal by their owner; and for th
as for a copy of the *Addenda* to "Eu
to express his thanks.

Notwithstanding the amount of
regarding Poe, his life has not be
treated. The larger portion of the
consists of wholly new information,
ments so radically corrected as t
In preparing this the author has b
the assistance of very many perso
can thank by name only a few, bu
the lack of any public acknowled
be misconstrued as neglect. Not
minor matters and the incessant
detail made by the present volu
of Poe's parentage and marriage is
given according to the facts, fr
vestigation. The discovery of t
settle Poe's history during the
ing which nothing whatever has

definitely known, was due to th
of Robert Lincoln, Secretary of W
ness of Adjutant-General R. C. Dr
and other material collected by
Neilson Poe, and hitherto unpublis
value, particularly the papers tha
contemporary account of Poe's
Snodgrass correspondence, which af
details of Poe's years in Philadel
respondence of Poe with Mr. James
the most interesting of all from a
view, throws much light into obs
Poe's mature life, as well as upo
character, and the correspondence
F. Briggs and Mr. Lowell is the
the only authoritative piece of ev
Poe's affairs during his conne
"Broadway Journal." Letters of
other original material bearing u
also been furnished by Messrs.
Dreer, Thomas H. Ellis, W. J. M
Aldrich, Allan B. Magruder, D
William Nelson, Mrs. Susan A.
E. Foster, John Parker, J. N. I
Darley, and Arthur Mazyck. Mr
kindly loaned the daguerreotype

portrait here given is engraved.
generous assistance the author m
acknowledgment, as well as to Pro
Stringham, of the University of Cali
substance of the criticism of Poe's
speculations, and to Mr. Frank Park
and invaluable aid in many ways; e
he feel deeply obliged to Miss An
General Drum, and Mr. Lowell, for t
and liberality.

BEVERLY, MASS., *December* 18, 1884.

EDGAR ALLAN

CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE.

EDGAR ALLAN POE was born a
ary 19, 1809. His parents were r
of the company then playing at the
Theatre. His father, who was abo
of age, had been known in his yout
as the son of the ardent Revolution
vid Poe, whose name he bore, and
student of law. His friends, how
him rather as a clever amateur a
companion of the Thespian Club; a
emigrated to Georgia, where one
brothers had settled, they may ha
ing out of keeping with his affable
unreflecting character in the repo
left the brown law books ranged
of his uncle's brother-in-law and
stage. Old General Poe, as the
him in recognition of his Revolu
was not a man to condone such a

eldest born. He was in his sixt
least three younger children to p
let the runaway shift for himself,
diously familiar, in after years, t
who was most successful on the b
of the "Wild Gallant" which he
in real life; but his father was
worldly-minded, dry-hearted mi
wrights.

General Poe, indeed, left a m
tue. Every action of his life
and decisive man, from the time
public notice as "one David Po
leader of the mob that ousted R
Royal Sheriff, from the city,
tacked the Tory editor, Willi
slanderer of Washington. He h
to a rude and resolute strength,
probable tradition he traced his d
father, John Poe, who had emig
from the north of Ireland and
vania, to one of Cromwell's off
ceived grants of Irish land, wh
side he is said to have been nep
Bride, who fought under Nelso
and rose to be an Admiral of
Revolutionary post of Assista
General for Baltimore, he was a
ive official, whose patriotism was
seated, since he advanced mon

private funds, for which, be it ad
was made, except long afterwar
a pension to his widow. His c
however, did not lessen his de
when he was in his seventy-sec
spirit blazed out again in his a
volunteer in the battle of North
old enemies, the British. An ho
sible man, capable of worldly sa
he was; and if the ties of natu
to have been in his heart neither
even toward his orphaned gran
be remembered that he was no
they were well cared for by thei
The last record concerning him
on his parting visit to this cou
grave and kissed the sod abov
"Ici repose un cœur noble!"

On the maternal side, the reco
lineage belongs to the fleeting me
and is both briefer and more c
facts that remain in regard to
grandmother have been practica
books of theatrical annals, and ar
in contemporary newspapers. T
Chronicle and the Universal Adv
at Boston, in its issue of Febru
nounced that Mrs. Arnold, an E
the Theatre Royal, Covent Ga
her first appearance in Americ

Street Theatre, on Februa
of her first night was an
fortune, she must have recei
of applause, as is seen by
istic notice: —

"We have had the pleasure
the anticipation of the satisf
would receive from the dram
nold. The theatre never shoo
plause, as on her first appea
last. Not a heart but was sen
tongue but vibrated in her prai
in approbation. Nor did these
die with the evening, her me
pleasing theme of every conve

Mrs. Arnold, whose forte
vocal music, sang often, a
operas, burlettas, and rom
close of the season, May 16
a vocal concert, at which h
made her first appearance
songs adapted to her youth
the mother was not confined
now captivated — "Nobody
was one of her piquant ditti
heart of one Mr. Tubbs,
forte; and after their speed
set up a theatre at Portla
theatre it must have beer

[1] *Massachusetts Mercury*,

family affair, since it was recrui
teurs of the town, and had for i
only Tubbs's piano, his wife's
cocity of his step-daughter, — "
Arnold, whose powers as an ac
miration." [1] One winter's exper
rical enthusiasm of Maine pr
when spring came the three were
bers of the troupe made up by M
the Boston and Charleston con
the latter city. On their way S
at New York, where two perfor
at the John Street Theatre in
company was soon afterwards sca
yellow fever of that year. D
the family went South, and on t
Charleston theatre, in November,
They performed the whole winte
in only slight parts, — a child, a
and at the close of the season, in
of Poe's grandmother Tubbs an
sort, the piano-forte player, disa
tory, while young Miss Arnold
North and joined the Philadelphi
her new associates she acted the
(1798–1802), during their wint
the city, their summer ventures
on their excursions to Washingt
her rôles were usually unimporta

[1] *The Eastern Herald and Gazette of M*

benefits and was apparently u
of Mr. Usher and Mrs. Snowd
1800, Mr. C. D. Hopkins, a y
reputation on his very first ap
Lumpkin," and became a pop
company, with which he contin
during occasional absences at t
after the season had closed with
Mr. Green, of the Virginia com
played at Baltimore, and then
June 4. Possibly it was on th
charms of the *petite* and arch
heart of young Poe; but if i
must quickly have grown dim
two months she was married t
had been acting during the
Early in August the pair were
of Alexandria, and they were
rank among the Virginia play
read in old files of Petersburg
mond papers.

In the fall of 1804 a new m
the company in the person of M
youth of twenty-five summers

[1] The age of both David Poe and M
oned (Ingram, i. 3) as if they were bor
ness of the lovers, however, disappear
features of their mythical elopement.
nold at Boston and Portland in 1796
apply to a child of nine years, and he
New York (the play-bill ascribes one o

at Augusta, and made "his sec
any stage" at Charleston, Dece
he had previously performed
December 1, without any spe
He had continued uninterrupted
pany until the close of the sea
diffident, easily abashed actor,
rôle as "Harry Thunder" in "W
not, as has hitherto been asserted,
and tempted before the footlight
except the Comic Muse; nor i
uncle, who died the following S
him, as the tradition avers, from
the theatre after he had entered
November, at all events, the ne
particular favor was asked as be
was playing in the Virginia com
and with it he continued as it m
place through its wide circuit, un
ber, 1805, it opened the season
theatre in Washington. Mr.
larly unfortunate in this ventur
of his losses was that of the p
he is styled, Mr. Hopkins, who

Mountaineers," to "Mrs. Arnold," but pr
as the name of "Mrs. Tubbs" is in the s
been filled by a person so young. The c
the notices of her acting make it exceedi
was much, if at all, younger than her
"certainly not later than 1780." — John
thor, June 19, 1883.

illness, on October 26. The
widow among the rest, perform
and then went southward again.
Mr. Poe, with some pecuniary
(for these actors were always p
Hopkins, and early in February
playing at Richmond. They re
until May, when they started N
ing at Philadelphia in June an
new Vauxhall Gardens, New Yo
of July until late in August, the
by October, and were welcomed
friends, the Ushers.

Here they had their perman
three following years. From
criticisms[1] it is easy to form a c
idea of the personal appearance a
of the poet's father and mother.
man of prepossessing figure, suit
nile and gallant parts, the He
Sedleys, which he habitually to
full and manly, but untrained, de
tion and in power, his utterance
chanical, his gesture either too s
He was sometimes praised, but mo
or even made fun of, for his lack

[1] These are contained in the various jo
in which the Poes acted, and more partic
icals of elegant literature, — *The Polyant*
Theatrical Censor and Critical Miscellany, T
and Theatrical Register, and The New Eng

dependence on the prompter. His
row, his manner always remained
after repeated trials he sank at last
insignificance. But his wife, who
and trained to the stage, rose ab
although she apparently never equ
in popularity or in merit. She was
(Ariel was one of her rôles), and
she sang, lacked richness and volu
her Boston engagement with light
and soon won upon the public by h
roguery in the comic and her swee
mantic plays. Mr. Buckingham, t
acting critic of "The Polyanthos,"
hoyden to be her forte, but others
gent to her serious representations.
of time she became the leading fe
when Cooper and Fennell were
greatest triumphs, she was the C
or Blanche of the drama, and wh
prodigy, John Howard Payne, fir
Boston boards in 1809, she still
position, playing Palmyra to his
munda to his Tancred, and the
impression of the regard in whic
and of her own theatrical labor
best be got from the following f
which, moreover, throws a suggesti
worldly condition of the lesser
time: —

"If industry can claim fro
support the talents of Mrs. P
—She has supported and ma
ters more numerous and ardu
on our boards during any o
been obliged to perform thr
evening, and she has always b
has well comprehended the in

"In addition to her indust
claims for other favors from
talents. Her Romps and Se
an individuality which has n
own. But she has succeeded
sonations of tragedy; her con
with good sense and natural a
to hope therefore that the Bo
merits to be so slighted that p
result from her benefit night
other performers."[1]

This appeal was ineffect
vertised a second benefit,
Ushers, to indemnify them
personal card to the publi
for that sanction, influenc
which has ever yet distin
dience"), for what they te
and severe losses sustaine
tempts."[2] A friendly eff
"Senex" to increase Mrs

[1] *Boston Gazette*, M

praise of her moral qualities and d
and she was supported by the goo
ladies in society; but there was
against her among the critics, to
finally have succumbed, even if she
successfully defended by the char
ments to which, as Mr. Buckingh
husband resorted by calling upon
with the purpose of caning him
nence. From such incidents and
eral tone of criticism the natural co
Mrs. Poe was an interesting rather
actress, more deserving than for
debted for her moderate share of
her painstaking care than to native

She played very often during th
quently she sang, and sometimes sh
lish minuet,—the feminine counter
band's hornpipes, reels, and strat
are but two marked breaks in he
one in the early months of 1807,
William may have been born; the o
months of 1809, when she suffered
finement. The child, born January

[1] This is the date recorded by Poe on matr
versity of Virginia in 1826. The argument
Stoddard seeks to discredit it, on the ground
through January, rests on a too cursory
evidence. During that month Mrs. Poe appe
ant in a pantomime, apparently three times,
tised to appear January 20. Mr. Stoddard

Edgar. The mother went again
February 10, and played until the
son almost incessantly. The famil
ton, never to return, but not witho
ings toward the city, at least on
since on the back of a painting fro
she charged her son to "love Bost
his birth, and where his mother fo
most sympathetic friends."[1]

Early in September the Poes ha
bers of the New York company, i
mained until the following July,
acting the romantic and sentime
light comedy of the period. The
pression. At the close of the seas
York, and within six weeks Mrs.
her old friends of Mr. Green's V
and was announced at Richmond,
further mention of her husband:

did appear on that evening, puts the date
month; but the matter is settled by seve
the following is one: —

"We congratulate the frequenters of the
ery of Mrs. Poe from her recent confinem
little Actress will make her re-appearance
etc." *Boston Gazette*, February 9, 1809.

The suggested date, *February* 19, is fur
cause Mrs. Poe played in important rôles fi
10th and 24th of that month. The date u
January 20, apparently derived from Judge
timore, has no extant authority whatever to

[1] Ingram, i. 6.

already dead, or lived on in a linge
tion, is uncertain. Mrs. Poe contin
the field of her early triumphs, and f
commendation she received it would
charms and beauty had suffered no
over the audiences of the Southern ci
later, after having given birth to h
Rosalie, she fell into a rapid decline.
ing of the Richmond season, in Aug
was still an active member of the t
she cease to appear until after her
early in October. The family, whi
utmost destitution, immediately beca
of the charity of the Richmond ladi
ers, too, advertised a second night f
"in consequence of the serious and
indisposition of Mrs. Poe, and in co
the advice and solicitation of many
respectable families,"[1] and on the m
day the following card appeared: —

☞ TO THE HUMANE

"On this night Mrs. Poe, lingering on
ease and surrounded by her children, a
ance; and *asks it perhaps for the last ti*

A few days later, December 8, she
kind words in a Richmond paper, a
one at Boston, was all that marked

[1] *The Virginia Patriot*, November 2
[2] *The Enquirer*, November 29, 1811

career which, though hono
full of labor, anxiety, and
crown, the gauze and the fl
the robes and the red shoes
faded things. Harlequin r
bine before the footlights fl
left over from the comedy
the eldest five years old, al
Possibly the actors might h
protection, but the disastro
theatre on Christmas night
calamity, which threw the
turned the play-house into a
the community, and in the
tended to all the sufferers
neglected. Mrs. Allan, a
five years, and her friend
were attracted by the your
Edgar, the other Rosalie, i
iam, the eldest, was cared fo
at Baltimore.

CHAPTER II.

EDUCATION.

Mr. John Allan, who now with
tance gave his family name to the o
poor actors, had emigrated from Ayr
a member of the firm, Ellis & Allan,
at the age of thirty-one acquired posi
tune in the Virginia tobacco trade.
married for some time, but was still c
although in admitting a stranger's off
family he had at first merely yielded
urgent entreaties, the black-eyed, cur
naturally soon became a pet in the
especially as his precocity and beauty
the charm of his young affection to m
pride as well as touch the heart of the
At the age of six he could read, draw
of more showy accomplishments (the
Virginia table, cleared for dessert, bei
his trick before company was to
healths, and his talent was to declaim
which he had, perhaps by inheritan
aptitude. He received the rudiments
in a private school at Richmond, a

three summers following his
White Sulphur Springs, the
ern resort; in both places
glimpses of him, — a prettil
pony or running with his d
as a general favorite, and
only child. About June
sailed for England, with h
Edgar, apparently for a long
of some of his household go
tion sale before leaving.
Branch, a Murray's Read
Spelling Books for Edgar'
the voyage, and shortly a
the child, then six years old
School, Stoke Newington, a

His residence there seems
of remembrance upon his n
that the delight in the and
characterized him, sprang
familiarity with a memorabl
from the eye and hand. T
has since been lost in the c
olis, then consisted of a lon
of the Tudor time, following
road; near the old Green, b
that still bear the names of

[1] Colonel Thomas H. Ellis, to
These statements regarding Mr. A
the books of the firm, Ellis & Allan

stood the houses of Anne Boleyn's ill-
Earl Percy, and of her daughter's fort
ier, the favorite Leicester; to the w
green lanes, over hazy inland fields, and
the more modern street of Queen Anne
Georgian architecture, where behind
box-bordered parterre rose the white M
School, old and irregular, sloping in
the high brick wall, with its ponderous
iron-studded gates, which inclosed the
In the seclusion of these grounds Po
school-days from his eighth to his thirt
there in the long, narrow, low school
ceiled, gothic-windowed, with its irreg
jackknife-hewed desks and the sacred
for master and ushers (in one of the
the murderer, Eugene Aram), he conne
and mispronounced his French; in th
beyond the many tortuous passages and
little stairways, he first felt the wake
conscience, whose self-echoing whisper
wards heightened into the voice and
ror of the Spanish *Hombre Embozad*
wide, graveled, treeless, and benchless
he trained his muscles in the sports
on Saturday afternoon the mighty
open he and his mates filed out to w
the gigantic and gnarled trees, amid
lived Shakespeare's friend, Essex, or to
boy's eyes of wonder at the thick wall

dows and doors, massive with lo
hind which Robinson Crusoe wa
Sunday, after the holiday ramb
the summons of the hollow-to
sounding from its fretted tower,
the scholars' remote gallery pe
weekly transformation in the pu
erend man, with countenance so
with robes so glossy and so cleri
wig so minutely powdered, so r
— could this be he who, of late
and in snuffy habiliments, admi
hand, the Draconian Laws of th
gigantic paradox!"[1]

It seems a monotonous existe
by the spirit and the flush of boy
a full one, the life of keen sens
rivalries and party strife, the first
prize. "*Oh, le bon temps,*" Poe c
de fer!" and, indeed, he must ha
lonely hour, too, under that meagr
of inferior English school-mast
he learned to run and leap, co
speak French, and during some p
regularly visited the Allans in Lo
bering that these five years are
home ties are drawn closest about
American boys, and the lessons of
by them, a too curious mind migh

[1] *Works*, iii. 419.

stretch of the boy's life the first wor
sinister influence which afterwards s
passably the circle of isolation about t
Bransby, however, the parson-teache
nothing in Edgar Allan, as he was
that he was clever, but spoilt by "ar
amount of pocket money."[1] The vi
was said by Beaumont and Fletcher t
"where ale and cakes are plenty;" b
wildest excesses were probably in th
berry tarts and ginger beer on which
Friars a year or two later Clive Newco
his pocketful of sovereigns. Poe, no d
fun, the homesickness, and the good th
boys did; and when, in the June of 18
hind him the old trees and ruinous ho
and fragrance and mould of the dr
parish, and returned to Richmond, he
different from his mates, except that
first trials at verse and kept the manu

He arrived home with the Allans
and at once renewed his studies in the
Classical School of Joseph H. Clark
scribed as a fiery, pedantic, pompous I
Trinity College, Dublin. Here he read
classical authors of the old preparator
continued his French, and capped La
pastime of which he is reported to ha
He was lacking in diligence and accu

[1] *The Athenæum*, No. 2660, p. 497, Octobe

quick and brilliant, and when it ca
set to be at the top of the schoo
rival in scholarship. In athletic e
half of youthful life, he was espec
aided in this, perhaps, by the trai
House playground; slight in fi
robust and tough, he was a swi
leaper, and he possessed, togethe
in boxing, the English school-boy
it; in particular he was a fine, b
as, since Byron, poets seem to l
right to the mention of their a
once more recorded that in his
swam in the James River from
Warwick Bar, six miles, against
and in a hot June sun, and after
to the city with little apparent
dently cut a considerable figure
was its champion in the simple to
days, prominent in its debating
as a versifier in both a gallant
— no slight distinction in the
who listened to the English o
retirement of Master Clarke to
ter William Burke, in the fall o
the outgoing principal.

But neither his facile scholar
in quoting Latin hexameters a
rhymes, nor his fame in the s
favorite of the school. His ar

said by one of themselves, remembered
sprung from the poor actors, and were a
leadership. Poe, too, partly it may be
was aware of the reason for this slight
ostracism, helped it by a defiant and irr
that sometimes broke through the rest
well-bred manners. One who was cou
to him than the rest describes him as '
capricious, inclined to be imperious, and
generous impulses not steadily kind, o
able."[1] The indulgence to which he h
customed at home with its resulting la
nature, and his marked ability with it
intellectual pride, contributed somewh
this temper; but he was always reserve
especially liable to misconstruction by
his youth as in later life he never form
—— he may not have had the power — o
timate friends. No one, it would seem
him. He had his chums in his own and
the younger set, and he showed them hi
as he quoted Horace, in search of a ce
recognition; he was sensible of affect
capable of warm attachment, as in his fr
young Sully, the artist's nephew, who
but difficult boy; amid all such assoc
ever, he lived most to himself. He wa
too, and in the light of his insubstanti
well as through ruder experience, he fe

[1] Ingram, i. 24.

riness. The sense of social wr
disposition, the imaginative temp
ward will, the excitable, impatien
— these lines of character were c
or stronger, in the moody, self-c
he found himself alone and left
His foster-father was liberal in
foster-mother considerate, forgiv
but in spirit as in blood he was o
from them; his kindred were unl
teachers were the merest pedago
ions cast in another mould. It
all usual attention was not given
not neglected, nor were his surr
ant. Mr. Allan, although he had
a house of his own, belonged to t
and agreeable society that Virgini
of her old-fashioned and justly fa
hospitality, and a childhood spe
with such gentlemen as Edgar
miliarly met could not fail to be
of the highest utility in forming
character. A boy, however, is lit
value of such surroundings, and i
his heart Poe may, amid all such
have missed what to a child of
more consequence, — responsive
secret understanding that spring
was, however it happened, a lone

Under these circumstances the

unlikelihood in the story that rests o
words, that one day, in the home of a
schoolmate, when his friend's moth
tle, and gracious, spoke to him with
tenderness, the tones thrilled him w
sation, and kindled within him, in h
the first purely ideal love of his s
lady, Jane Stith Stanard, he becan
tached, as a lonely boy of fourteen, w
were beginning to wander from an
home, naturally would; but she was
and friend only for a short time. She
1824, at the early age of thirty-one ye
long while he haunted her grave by r
on the mystery of the dead, and the
of the dry grasses and the louder mo
winds his young heart caught the first
that pæan of passionate regret and s
ror which afterward, struck on his ly
Io Triomphe of despair. The fasci
lady did not cease with her life, but
years; the direct experience of dea
was the ground on which his ima
worked, and determined the early be
toward a sombre supernaturalism.

still, through all the unconscious
time and genius, the individualit
discernible in two of its marke
dency to idealize a woman's me
ship of his emotional beliefs wit

Poe left Master Burke's in
spent the remainder of the year
self, with the aid of private i
University of Virginia, then i
In his not too scanty leisure h
first flame, in the ordinary way
his devotions to a neighbor's
than himself, Miss Sarah Elmir
father diligently intercepting a
mance ended on the young lad
marriage, and on Poe's in some
à la Byron, wherein the reject
immortalize the fair one's infid
rata's reminiscences of her lov
conventional: he was, she says,[1]
silent, but as she adds that he
and clever at his sketching, part
he evidently, like undistinguis
humble means to overcome the
versation. The most fondly r
this year, however (the last in w
the same roof with Mr. Allan)
spent in the pleasant and spa
Mr. Allan purchased in this s

[1] *Appletons' Journal*, N. S., iv. 4

tled abode. From its high southwa
would look down on the green island
foaming rapids of the James, and
winding river the village of Manch
wooded fields beyond, bathed in th
noon; or, stepping out between the
the adjoining wide-roofed balcony w
floor, where stood the fine London
perhaps, gave to his childish mind it
astronomy, would look at the stars,
would watch the moonlight falling
and jessamines, the box and the fig-tr
vines and raspberry bushes planted
Andalusian owner in the quiet garde
now wild and desolate, keeps no frag
romance of his memory. To that
the landscape of his innocent years,
sciously bidding farewell.

On February 14, 1826, he wrote
the place and date of his birth, in
tion book of the University of Vir

lively animation when, as fre
grew warm in his cause. He
the custom of undergraduate
tion room, the punch bowl, th
sports, and pedestrianism. H
the classes in Latin and Gr
and Italian, and attended then
facile rather than studious, h
critical knowledge of these la
moved in a jolly set. At first
chum, one Miles George, of R
to adopt the local descriptio
and pugilistic duel in correct
(the combatants shook hand
Poe settled in No. 13 West
walls with charcoal sketches o
gathered the fellows to enjoy
the delectable old-time South
and to play at loo or seven-u
and in card-playing Poe ac
either was or affected to be th

"Poe's passion for strong drin
timate college mates, "was as m
that for cards. It was not the *to*
influenced him; without a sip
he would seize a full glass, with
send it home at a single gulp. T
up; but if not, he rarely return

[1] Thomas Goode Tucker to Dougl
1880. MS. The substance of this

If the full glass was one of peach
merely of the peach brandy unmixed
tibility to such a draught, it should
by no means indicates a weak head,
a youth of seventeen; but this fashio
en barbare (as Baudelaire styles it
through life. Not intoxication, howe
bling, was then his vice; and for th
to be expected from his excitable ter
was ill adapted, or else luck ran stron
since he ended the year with heavy d
By his recklessness in card-playing
have lost caste in the aristocratic cli
ever his private history may have be
come under the notice of the Facu
stated to have been at that time un
ful and strict; but as the administ
University was somewhat peculiar,
theories of its founder, Jefferson, a
the time will make the facts clearer.

It seems that the Faculty desired

lecture room where the studen
were answering roll-call; a gla
suspicion, and a shadow of sus
they made good their escape by
and, eluding pursuit by strik
quented by-path for a wooded
of the Ragged Mountains, sa
they enjoyed their favorite di
until at the end of a three days
allowed to respond to the roll-ca

Under such rules of governm
plies, freedom from censure by
convincing proof of a blameles
no reason to suppose that Poe's
the standard of morals that obt
gave occasion for much unfavora
widely different from the habit
of his own set who became the
acceptable Episcopalian clergy
into debt as did others whose
tradesmen's shops and the hote
ment of a statute that declare
the reasonable wants of a stu
But amid the dissipations of
found leisure to cultivate his ow
gather his friends about him t
travaganza of his invention, r
tones, or to some poem he had r
solitary rambles in the Ragge
still had no confidential frien

him," is the unanimous testimony of
but they all describe him consistent
show he was a spirited youth, wh
sorbed life, frequently of high int
easily diverted into the commonpl
a fashionable set, and probably e
with the more recklessness because
reserve. While Poe was still at
however, Mr. Allan thought it be
the state of his affairs personally,
Charlottesville, where he paid all
he thought just; but, not being
his boy's luck without wincing, he
losses at play, which amounted
five hundred dollars.[1] At the clo
December 15, 1826, Poe came ho
est honors in Latin and French;
mollify his guardian, who, instea
to return, placed him in his ov
From this confinement Poe soo
out to seek his fortune in the wo

CHAPTE

WANDERI

POE made his way at onc
there in the spring tried to
the world by publishing hi
persuaded Calvin F. S. Th
nineteen, who had just set
ington Street, to undertak
course he saw the first and
his invention in the shape
mean in appearance and n
titled "Tamerlane and othe
ume, the only venture of Th
was published about midsu
advertised by the leading m

[1] *Tamerlane and other Poems.*

later, although the edition was sr
it was still sufficiently known to fi
first comprehensive work on Ame

It passed into circulation such
by these contemporary notices, an
fact Poe's statement that it wa
private reasons counts for little.
be confessed at once that any u
tion by Poe regarding himself
with great caution. In this case
be seen, his circumstances give
his story.

There is, perhaps, more colo
claim put forth in his boyishly aff
this volume was written in 1821-
the time when his mind would
unfold, and as the statement ag
dition of a manuscript volume
Clarke by Mr. Allan, in order t
mer's advice respecting its publi
able that some of the poems a
drafted; but from the passages t
pressing influence of his own ho
experience of love and death, as
is recorded of his habits at the
clear that they were re-written
resent his genius at the stage
they were printed. The precoci

[1] *Specimens of American Poetry*, by Sar
S. G. Goodrich & Co., 1829: iii. p. 405.

marked, but it is a full-grow
of thirteen, who has been bi
malady; and, indeed, strikin
relief is mainly due to the li
them from Poe's perfect work.

"Tamerlane" in its firs
poetic susceptibility, if less li
its present one. In the story
difference between the two ve
great conqueror relates to a co
in his boyhood, among the r
he had loved a maiden, and
ambition for her and for hims
termined to go away and see
the prescience of genius assu
In pursuit of this plan, he say
hint of his departure or its
asleep in a matted bower; a
when, after the fulfillment of
to seat her on "the throne o
found his destined bride had
of his desertion. *Hinc illæ l*

Neither in this tale, nor
pieces of a personal charact
was there anything to comm
especially as the style and sp
imitative, the constructions i
dark, and the measure as la
himself is fabled to have b
the volume now lies partly i

graphical passages, such as those w
how conscious genius takes its own im
unerring divine instinct, or express th
and slightly bitter resentment on fir
not a prophet in his own household;
the subtler self-revelation afforded by
of passing poetic moods, which it may
are surer signs of promise than poe
cause, although they may as easily be
tional, they cannot be so successfully
from others by patience and art, r
language ever ring true except *num*
by the very breath of the indwelling A
confined, and stammering as is their
these earliest poems, they show that,
fected by the artificiality and turgidi
sentiment, the low motive, and the se
cessories of the Byronic model, the
turned naturally to his own experienc
write from his heart.

In particular, two characteristics
primary in Poe's nature. He was
proudest of men, and from many expr
it is plain that he cultivated pride,
hood. He thought it the distinctive m
He declares with emphasis that ever
dowed soul, conscious of its power, will

"Find *Pride* the ruler of its will.'

Byron had sown the evil seed, but it h

very favorable soil. This persona
needs only to be glanced at in pass
characteristic belongs rather to h
and affected his art more directly
beauty did not affect his æsthetic
it aroused his dreaming faculty.
the world as a vague and undefi
notes only the broad and general
landscape; he does not see any obj
imagination so predominates ove
powers, he is so much more poet th
loses the beautiful in the suggesti
the feelings, it awakens, and this
value he found in beauty through
mood was a part of his ordinary ex
times he describes it: —

"In spring of life have ye ne'er
Some object of delight upon,
With steadfast eye, till ye hav
The earth reel — and the visio

Sometimes he expresses it (and in
the first whisper of "Ligeia"): —

"'T was th
Came o'er me in the night, and
Its image on my spirit."

This exaltation is continually th
grets and of his longings; he as
bolic spiritual meaning, and eve
as being something

"giv
In beauty by our God, to those al

Who otherwise would fall from life and
Drawn by their heart's passion" —

This value, whether true or false, whic
such emotional moods, is the significan
poetic life, and shows that the dreamin
a primary element in his genius. Sor
true, the real scene remains prominent
but even then, although it does not fa
mere emotion, it is not unchanged; it
natural, and is removed into the preter
two of these early poems — "The Lake
of the Dead" — is this the case, and it
that Poe retained both among his wo
perceived that of all in this collectio
have his peculiar touch. In the latte
the treatment of landscape is wholly hi
as its expression is, it affords the firs
that new tract of Acheron, as it we
revealed "out of space, out of time:"

"And the stars shall look not down
From their thrones, in the dark hea
With light like Hope to mortals gi
But their red orbs, without beam,
To thy withering heart shall seem
As a burning, and a fever
Which would cling to thee forever.
But 't will leave thee, as each star
In the morning light afar
Will fly thee" —

Such imaginings — the vision of the
with averted faces, the identifying of
cination of an ill-omened nature wit

fever within, the dissolving orbs flee far in the streamin well portend in poetry a g Blake's in art.

The abundant alloy in th however, and the rudeness condemned the volume to brought neither fame to the printer, and shortly after appearance of Poe, which was followed by the remov York. Neither in his stay his later life in Buffalo, N Mo., did Thomas, who lived tion, either to his own fa known, to his friends or a venture in the book-trade view of this fact,[1] in conne publication of reminiscences well acquainted with Poe, a of this obscure portion of h inferred that Thomas never thor he knew with the fa "The Raven." The obvious lived in Boston under an ass

Whether this were so or sufficed to exhaust Poe's r found himself, a youth of eig

[1] Mrs. Martha (Thomas) Booth to

less in the city of his birth, and with
self-support. In this extremity he too
way out of his difficulties, and on M
at Boston in the army of the Unite
private soldier, under the name of Ed
He stated that he was born at Bo
by occupation a clerk; and although
then accepted into the service, he ga
twenty-two years. He had, says the
eyes, brown hair, and a fair comple
five feet eight inches in height. H
assigned to Battery H, of the First A
serving in the harbor at Fort Inde
October 31, the battery was ordered
trie, Charleston, S. C., and exactly o
was again transferred to Fortress
The character of Poe's life during t
now be but imperfectly made out, sin
under whom he served are dead; bu
presently to be given, it appears that
his duties as company clerk and ass
commissariat department so as to win
of his superiors, and was in all respe
and efficient soldier. On January 1,
appointed Sergeant-Major, a promot
the invariable custom of the army, w
for merit.

[1] These statements are based on the papers r
A. Perry, or Poe, now on file in the War Depa
certified copies were sent to the author,

At some time afte
is said to have mad
Allan. It is not u
ing acquainted with
being interested in
oring to enter West
he could rise in the
plying to his foster-
received this news
mined; but as he
matter until after
there is ground for
the wanderer in com
At all events, it see
Mrs. Allan's death
1829, that Poe ret
absence granted by
plication. The re
following letter, w
curacy in some of i

GENERAL:

I request your pe
vice Edgar A. Perry
the 1st Reg't of Arti

The said Perry is
unfortunate parents
of the Richmond th
letter was taken un
a gentleman of wea

who, as I understand, adopted his protégé
heir; with the intention of giving him
tion, he had placed him at the Univers
from which, after considerable progress i
a moment of youthful indiscretion he
was not heard from by his Patron for
in the mean time, he became reduced to
enlisting into the service and accordingl
soldier in my Regiment, at Fort Indepe
— Since the arrival of his company at th
made his situation known to his Patron a
the young man has been permitted to
result is, an entire reconciliation on the
len, who reinstates him into his family
who in a letter I have received from hi
his son may be discharged on procurin
an experienced soldier and approved se
to take the place of Perry so soon as h
be obtained. The good of the service, t
be materially injured by the discharge.

I have the honor to be,

With great respect, your obedi

JAS.

(

To the General Commanding the
E. Dept. U. S. A., New York.

The official reply to this applic
order, dated April 4, in accordanc
Poe was discharged, by substitute, A
fore leaving his post he obtained
letters from his officers, which sho

[1] There is no record of this furlo

that he had already fo
West Point, and indicat
understanding on which
favor : —

FORTRE

Edgar Poe, late Serg't-
under my command in H
lery, from June 1827 to
time his conduct was unex
formed the duties of con
the Subsistent Departmen
promptly and faithfully do
intirely free from drinking

In addition to the abo
Poe[1] was appointed Serg
on the 1st of Jan'y, 1829,
exemplary in his deportme
discharge of his duties —
fidence.

Bt.

I have known and had
the conduct of the above
some three months durin
been highly praiseworthy
His education is of a very
be free from bad habits,
Howard and Adjt. Griswo

[1] Originally written *Per*

derstanding he is, thro' his friends, an
det's warrant, I unhesitatingly recomm
ising to aquit himself of the obligatio
studiously and faithfully.

W. J
Lt. Col. Comd'g Fo

With these credentials in his
charged Sergeant-Major, aged t
Richmond, where no time was lost i
place him at West Point. At Mr.
Andrew Stevenson, the Speaker of
Major John Campbell, under date
wrote letters of recommendation, n
est now; and a week later James
father of one of Poe's closer sch
representative of the district in C
influence in these terms: —

RICHMOND, V

SIR:

Some of the friends of young Mr.
solicited me to address a letter to yo
lieving that it may be useful to him
to the Government for military servi
Poe and am acquainted with the fact o
born under circumstances of great a
know from his own productions and
proofs that he is a young gentleman
eants. I believe he is destined to be d
he has already gained reputation for t
ments at the University of Virginia.
sessed of feeling and character pecul

to public patronage. I am entir
salutary system of military discipli
his honorable feelings, and eleva
him worthy of confidence. I w
recommendation if I did not beli
munerate the Government at son
services and taleants, for whatever

I have the honor to be
Very respectfully y

Major John Eaton, Sec'y of War, W

Of more interest than all th
Allan's own communication: —

Ric

D[r] Sir:

The youth who presents this, is
Lt. Howard, Capt. Griswold Colo.
tative and the speaker, the Hon'l
and my friend Major Jno. Campb

He left me in consequence of
University at Charlottesville, beca
fused to sanction a rule that the sh
had adopted there, making Debts
cretions. I have much pleasure in
his examination at the close of the
to himself. His history is short.
Quartermaster General Poe, of M
as I understand still receives a pe
or disabilities of her husband. Fra
that he is no relation to me whatev
[in] whom I have taken an activ

theirs; with no other feeling than that,
care, if he be in distress. For myself I
I do request your kindness to aid this y
motion of his future prospects. And i
great pleasure to reciprocate any kindn
him. Pardon my frankness; but I add

Your ob'd't se'v't,

THE HON'BLE JOHN H. EATON,
Sec'y of War, Washington City.

The coldness of feeling with wh
here classes the boy he had brou
from infancy with the objects of hi
ity might lead one to believe that
not intend to make Poe his heir, b
trary thought to be honorably rid of
further patronage by having paid a
for a substitute in the army, and he
career for his protégé in his self-cho
Such a letter must have been ga
pride. He presented it with the otl
retary of War in person.

clared to be "indicative
but the business of matt
introduction the poet w
Neilson Poe, his cousin
was employed in Gwynn
has been stated, it was a
son's father, George Poe
critical advice of John
Baltimore some few years
ing the "Yankee" at Bo
ence columns of that pe
September, 1829, the foll

"If E. A. P. of Baltimore
though he professes to reg
rior to anything in the whol
save two or three trifles re
sense, rather exquisite nons
justice, might [sic] make a
nificent poem. There is a g
a hope.

Dim vales and sha
And cloudy-lookin
Whose forms we c
For the tears that
. . . .
The moonlight
. . . .
Over hamlets, over
Wherever they ma
O'er the strange w

[1] *Work*

O'er spirits on the wing,
O'er every drowsy thing—
And buries them up quite
In a labyrinth of light,
And then how deep!— *Oh deep*
Is the passion of their sleep!

He should have signed it Bah! We
others." [1]

The tone of this indicates tha
backed by any strong personal frien
He received the doubtful satire w
however, and replied in a letter
December issue, and prefaced by
remarks:—

"The following passages are from
works of a young author, about to be p
more. He is entirely a stranger to us,
faults, if the remainder of 'Al Aaraaf'
are as good as the body of the extracts
say nothing of the more extraordinary
serve to stand high — very high — in the
shining brotherhood. Whether he *wil*

The poet's letter follows:

"I am young — not yet twen
worship of all beauty can make
so in the more common meanin
give the world to embody one
imagination. (By the way, do
you ever read the exclamation
speare? — 'What a number
afloat before such an author co
you as a man that loves the s
— the beauty of the natural b
earth — there can be no tie
brother for brother — it is no
one another, as that they both
their affections are always run
— the same channel — and ca
and have been from my child
therefore be said that

"'I left a calling for thi
A duty broke — a fat

for I have no father — nor mo

"I am about to publish a
greater part written before
about 'Heaven' the editor of
might write a beautiful, if no
(the very first words of encour
to have heard). I am very
not written *either* — but that I
they will give me time.

"The poems to be publis
'Tamerlane' — one about fo

three hundred lines, with smaller piec
has some good poetry, and much extra
have not had time to throw away.

"'Al Aaraaf' is a tale of another
discovered by Tycho Brahe, which ap
peared so suddenly — or rather, it is
will insert an extract about the palace
Deity, in which you will see that I hav
of the lost sculptures of our world to hav
to the star 'Al Aaraaf' — a delicate p
to their divinity: —

'Uprear'd upon such height arose

After Poe's quotations from this p
erlane," and from the verses now
vised form as "A Dream within
editor concludes: —

"Having allowed our youthful writ
his own behalf, — what more can we do
genuine poetry? Nothing. They wh
not need more; and they who are
words upon them? We shall not." [1]

ence was published at the c
a thin book, but respectal
fusion of extra leaves bea
lish and Spanish poets, ar
"Al Aaraaf," the leading
garded as incomprehensible
due to Poe's attempting, nc
also to express in an allegor
he had arrived at amid tl
the barracks. In the rapi
gence, beauty, which had
emotion, became an object
as well as an inspiration.
great moulding ideas of li
Naturally his juvenile fanc
as a maiden, Nesace, and,
to preside over, found it i
narrow wall between hea
Moslem mythology is the p
neither good nor bad, bu
served by Tycho Brahe, wh
be the abode of those spi

Dream; 2. *To* —— ("I saw thee o
("The bowers whereat, in dreams,
5. *The Lake.* *To* ——; 6. *Spiri*
8. *To M*—— ("I heed not that
now printed, revised, as *To* ——;
Heaven in *The Yankee.* Of these
édition is said to have been "su
and the second, fifth, sixth, and
poems are from the 1827 edition,

who choose, instead of that tranq
the highest bliss, the sharper del
and pleasing melancholy, at the
tion in the moment of their extr
point the allegory becomes cumb
ling of it more awkward, becau
itate Milton and Moore at th
the use of incongruous poetic m
he contrives to say that beauty
tion of the divine to mankind,
of the soul against sin. The ac
in whom beauty is personified b
descriptive of the Deity, who in
through the music of the sphere
fines of our earth and guide he
other worlds, which she should
contagion of evil,—

"Lest the stars totter in the g

In obedience to this mandate sh
tation in which she calls upon h
pecially her handmaid Ligeia, t
mony of nature, to attend her.

Here, with singular abruptne
cludes.

Of course, as serious work it v
"Queen Mab," "Heaven and E
Loves of the Angels," it was
a boy. The obscure allegory,
structural relation between it
mance, the discordant influence
had broken Byron's ascendenc
and finally the style itself, wi
timed parentheses, its inconse
image into image and thought i
consistency in the meaning is l
gous defects of youthful compo
separate elements of confusion
seemingly unintelligible. In fa
had stopped without completi
ception; as if he found his co
weak, and broke off without try
ify his work. Nevertheless, it
mental and literary power; i
fancy, a flowing metre, and occ
that place it above "Tamerla
crude genius. In particular, t
Poe, the attempt to seize th
the evanescent, to perceive t
strongly marked, and althoug
in general as much Moore's
lane" is Byron's, and there is
its substance except the symb

vasive music of nature in Ligeia,
the author had a poetic faculty, a
break from his masters and learn t
words, was well starred. Poe's exp
effort was probably one premise of
which, helped by Coleridge's dictum,
and held firmly ever after, — that a
a contradiction in terms, and hence

The remainder of this pamphlet
biographically, of little consequence.
wholly rewritten, has gained in r
tiveness, though it has lost in sp
in its present form is as clever an
an imitation of Byron as was eve
some of the personal pieces, too, in w
the traditional attitude of the Pilg
past bliss and present desolation, B
continues strong. The ruling geni
however, was plainly Moore, who in
plied a model to be imitated, and
and notes information to be either

suggestions for later work. On a
page he himself comments with a
"Plagiarism — see the works of T
passim;" but, curiously enough, t
only one of the new poems which
of his originality. It is "Fairylan
the mist lighted by the moon, —
glamour descending at midnight
earth, drowsing all things into d
neath its elfish light, and at noo
yellow albatross in far-off skies. T
character in this imagery that ma
the memory when the crudities
are forgotten.

On the issue of this volume
Richmond, where, on the second
arrival, he met a companion of hi
whom he told some of his adver
carte blanche for copies of his poe
sellers, to be distributed among his
While "Al Aaraaf" was puzzlin
it came as a kind of Christmas gif
gling against the private merrime
wits of Baltimore and the public g
ary oracle of that city, "The Mir
ald," edited by John H. Hewitt ar
on the latter of whom full vengea
long afterwards, Poe waited for
probably with some anxiety, as
passed the age of twenty-one, the l

which he could be appointed. have felt some sympathetic un he was preparing to take a n who might not find Edgar's desirable. Poe's attainment not regarded as an insuperabl easy to grow two years young to grow four years older whe had already made up his min some months before, when h that he was "not yet twenty." tion, he solicited the influenc a younger brother of Mr. Alla United States Senator from M to Secretary Eaton, March 1 not from any personal acquain tion[1] from others. This lett attention. Poe was forthwit and on March 31 Mr. Allan sent as guardian to his ward

his duty by the child he had a
done. Poe, after a second visit
ing which he called on Mr. N. C
littérateur, and got a poem acc
forthcoming annual, went on to
he soon forgot all about the pron

He entered the Military Ac
1830, and settled at No. 28, Sou
age is recorded as being then
five months, but to the cadets
and it was jokingly reported am
Poe's annoyance, that " he had
appointment for his son, and th
the father had substituted hims
His room-mate, who tells this a
expression as weary, worn, and
his conversation on literary top
ception carping and censorious.
pants of the room, it is added,
utation; and Poe, in particular,
two fellows in the consumption
neglected his studies. The featu
notwithstanding its being draw
actors, are too grim. On others
he left a more agreeable impressi
Allan B. Magruder, Esq., write

[1] Dr. N. C. Brooks to the author, June
statements regarding the relations of Poe
on the same authority.

[2] Harper's *New Monthly Magazine*, xxx

low "of kindly spirit and simple style
tinues his brief reminiscences as follows

"He was very shy and reserved in his
with his fellow-cadets — his associates be
almost exclusively to Virginians. He was
plished French scholar, and had a wonder
for mathematics, so that he had no difficul
ing his recitations in his class and in ol
highest marks in these departments. He wa
of books, but his great fault was his neglec
parent contempt for military duties. His v
capricious temper made him at times utte
or indifferent to the ordinary routine of ro
and guard duties. These habits subjected h
arrest and punishment, and effectually pr
learning or discharging the duties of a soldi

This account is supported by the offic
which show that at the examination at the
half-year Poe stood third in French and
in mathematics, in a class of eighty-seven
he was not in arrest, however, before Ja

ades on the academy officials, isc
his associates, while the custom of
own lack of means forbade the ex
in which he had formerly indulg
intellectual, self-absorbed, exclusi
that he had been, but older, and c
discontented and unsettled. As
his share in the school-boy foll
and his greater neglect of routine
cribed in part to its increased irl
after his year of freedom from su

After the first six months had
up his mind to leave the service.
merely tired of the profession he
chosen, or felt that the recent
Allan, which took place at New
cut off his expectation of an inher
him on his own resources, or whe
vinced that literature was his un
makes little difference. Mr. All
expected, refused to sanction his
tion, and consequently he had to
means to accomplish his purpose.
1831, a court-martial was convene
to try offenders against discipline,
sitting adjourned until January 2

[1] This statement, which has no authori
have been originally derived from Poe. I
although accompanied by the evident misre
in all the biographies, that the reason wh
leave was the birth of an heir to Mr. Allan.

weeks preceding this adjourned meeti
lected practically all his duties as a
was consequently cited to appear befo
and answer to two charges of two s
each, to the effect that he had abse
from certain parades, roll-calls, guar
academical duties, and in the course of
ness had twice directly disobeyed the o
officer of the day. He pleaded guilty t
one specification, and as it was the c
the most patent of his offenses — his a
parade, roll-call, and guard duty — h
the gates of mercy on himself. The
him guilty, and passed a sentence o
which, however, in order that his pay n
to meet his debts to the academy,
mended should not take effect until M
February 8, 1831, the Secretary of W
the proceedings of the court, and orde
tence to be executed in accordance with



a part only was advan
poems which he propose
Mr. Elam Bliss, a reput
to have come to West
dertook the job presuma
subscription. The boo
ply "Poems," [1] purport
of the Baltimore volume
many of its readings, a
sion of six short poems
first forms of "To Hel
nore," "The Valley of
Sea," and "Israfel." I
lier poems and of "Fai
approached very near to
dozen new ones, inferior

[1] *Poems.* By Edgar A. Poe.
lished by Elam Bliss, 1831: pp.
the United States Corps of Ca
makes to Mr. ——, dated West
it contains: 1. *Int*
letter nected, 1829 edition;
B——;" consedi lines, u
of *Preface* in the

versions now known, his genius first
ifest both in the character of his poet
in the fascination of some perfect li
three are based on his own experien
sentially personal, — an imaginative
of the lines of the "Introduction:" -

> "I could not love except where Dea
> Was mingling his with Beauty's b
> Or Hymen, Time, and Destiny
> Were stalking between her and m

Of these, however, "To Helen," w
overpraised, owes much of its finish
changes since made in it. "Irene,
pressive in conception and original
far too rude to be regarded as mor
of some promise, and the "Pæan"
gotten. The remaining three, which
from slight Oriental suggestions, are
kind. In these for the first time t
and distance and mystical power of
tions are so given as to be hencef
with his genius. Two are landsca

The melodious monotone, the just
lines like these, are as artistic as t
But fine as is the substance of thes
excellent as is the execution at
rises to the rank of "Israfel," in
the lyric burst, the first pure song
notes most clear and liquid and s
ever sang, that waken and trembl
spiration not less magnetically bec
compass and lower in flight than i
the perfected song.

As his genius had developed, H
theory of poetry, which he expres
had made it out to himself, in the p
to Mr. ——." In this, after some
effect that pleasure instead of u
of all rational human activity, a
of poetry, he subjects Wordswort
practice to a very supercilious c
serts that poetry should be pursue
not as "a study," since "learning

ing perceptible images with definite, l
definite, sensations, to which end music
since the comprehension of sweet sou
indefinite conception. Music, when co
pleasurable idea, is poetry; music with
simply music; the idea without the musi
its very definiteness."

These crude generalizations, toge
incidental remarks that no one enjoy
and that delicacy is the poet's pecu
are the fundamental ideas out of w
ward slowly developed and finally
poetic theory; to the canons thus
submitted his own practice the more
they were consonant with his own ge

For the present neither his stat
poetic ideal nor his attempted illustr
terested the world. The only notice
ceived was from the laughter of th
were disappointed because the little
of dingy paper had not turned out to

mond. His own characteristic de
rupture with the family was that,
ric feeling, he "deliberately thre
fortune rather than endure a trivia
this statement is worth nothing as
Allan plainly regarded him as ung
and untrustworthy; and Poe's cond
to say the least, had been that of
he wished his own will, ought t
way.

[1] Poe to Mrs. Whitman, October 18, 1848

CHAPTER IV.

AT THE SOUTH.

POE determined to settle at Baltin
because he had a grateful rememb
kindness of his relatives there during
years before, and because he had no
where nor money to seek them. He
employment of his former acquaint
Gwynn, the editor, who apparently h
to distrust him, and it is noticeable
of his application shows that he still
on some terms with Mr. Allan : —

MR. W. GWYNN.

DEAR SIR, — I am almost ashamed t
at your hands after my foolish conduc
occasion — but I trust to your good nat

I am very anxious to remain and
Baltimore as Mr. Allan has married
longer look upon Richmond as my place

This wish of mine has also met with
I wish to request your influence in ob
uation or employment in this city. Sa
minor consideration, but I do not wish

Perhaps (since I understand Neils

you might be so kind as to employ me
some capacity.

If so I will use every exertion to d
fidence. Very respectfully y
E

I would have waited upon you pe
confined to my room with a severe sprai

Mr. Gwynn seems not to have
Christian grace of forgiveness.
weeks Poe turned to another Balti
ance, Mr. N. C. Brooks, who had r
a school at Reisterstown, not far
and offered himself as an assistant
too, nothing came. To a man of P
poverty there was left only a literar

Baltimore was not the most promi
young and friendless poet to seek
Less than four years before, Pinl
resided there since childhood, had
of twenty-five from the effects of p
couragement suffered just as his ge

he was only slightly known. In the c
first eighteen months of his life at Balti
he was always understood to have re
time, he bought his experience of ano
unappreciated authorship dearly. He
to prose to gain his living. Bulwer
the popular writers of the time, gave
his genius, both in subject and style.
influence he wrote at least six tales,
found no publisher for them when,
the summer, the Baltimore "Saturda
weekly literary paper recently started
bert A. Wilmer, a young journalist, s
attention in a way not unusual amon
rary periodicals of its class by offering
one of one hundred dollars for the
prose, the other of fifty dollars for th
poem, which should be presented within
On learning this Poe determined to sen
which he was so fortunately supplied v
better to secure his success to send in

more and more cursorily before
quarto-bound book was noticed;
taking it up found it entitled "Ta
Club," and written very neatly in
ters, and on reading it to his assoc
proved so agreeable a diversion ov
cigars that the first prize was imme
to its author. Among the poems,
"The Coliseum" was regarded the
in the same hand as the successful
out, and the second prize awarded
reviewer of Poe's "Al Aaraaf" fo
On October 12 these decisions we
the "Saturday Visiter;" one of th
Found in a Bottle," was publishe
story, and the name of its author
Allan Poe.

To that young man, whose fortu
their lowest ebb, the hard cash, as
couragement and the flattering car
advising the author to print all his

It is further illustrated by the
explanatory note from Poe to th
gentleman, who all his life was s
advancing merit: —

"Your invitation to dinner has wo
quick. I cannot come for reasons of t
ing nature — my personal appearanc
agine my mortification in making this
but it is necessary." [1]

And if further proof be needed
have been denied), it is furnished
Poe's years afterwards, in which
Kennedy has been, at all times, a t
— he was the first true friend I eve
debted to him for *life itself*." [2] P
acquaintance of Dr. Miller, with
wards had some correspondence,
trobe, who describes [3] him as belov
ure, erect in carriage, self-possesse
grave in countenance until he bec

For the following six months
time in contributing to the "S
of which no file is now known
hack work as Mr. Kennedy coul
none of which has been traced
no further public notice. He li
mer of 1833, at least, if not ea
tired way with his father's wid
Clemm, who, with her single su
ginia, seems to have settled in
spring, after a long absence fr
whatever he earned went into t
stock of the family. Mr. Wil
the "Saturday Visiter," was a co
Nearly every day they walked o
suburbs, and sometimes took V
eleven, with them. Poe was th
inexpensively, clad (Hewitt, his
says he wore "Byron collars a
and looked the poet all over"),
there was a delicacy which was

scolded the young man for coming h
cated the night before from a tavern
as if it were a rare occurrence. Th
tions,[1] however, cover only a compara
period. Wilmer was soon crowded ou
torship by Hewitt, and left Baltimore
in want, to follow journalism in other c
cousin, Miss Herring, on whom Poe
says he would write poems in her alb
to her; but his attentions were discour
father on account both of the relation
Poe's use of liquor. These visits be
as 1831, and continued until her marri
It would appear, too, from her account
at times to Philadelphia and other plac

On March 27, 1834, Mr. Allan
dropsy. Shortly before this event P
his house, and being told by Mrs. Al
not recognize him, that the physicians
den her husband to see any one he thr
and walked rapidly to Mr. Allan's cha
entrance Mr. Allan raised the cane wh
to walk with, and, threatening to stril
came within his reach, ordered him out
that Poe at once obeyed.[3] This was

[1] *Recollections of Edgar A. Poe.* By L. A. W
Daily Commercial, May 23, 1866.

[2] Miss A. F. Poe to the author, September 13,

[3] *Edgar Allan Poe.* A letter by Colonel Tho
the Richmond *Standard*, April 22, 1881. Mr. El
best means of judging the truth in this matter.

violent scene in which the two
left three children; his will cu
hopes of inheritance Poe may
and threw him irretrievably on
About this time he gathered h
sent them to a Philadelphia h
employed the summer upon the
and the autumn upon "Hans Pf
jected a new literary magazine,
timore by himself and Wilmer,
prospectus;[1] and after the new
Kennedy's recommendation, he
the "Southern Literary Messe
first struggles of its existence.
the editor, was attracted by his
talents, and in March published
"Berenice," with a very flatte
same time he addressed a lette
Kennedy, which elicited the foll

"Balt

employ. He has a volume of very biz
hands of ——, in Philadelphia, who fo
been promising to publish them. Th
highly imaginative, and a little give
He is at work upon a tragedy, but I
to drudging upon whatever may ma
have no doubt you and he will find yo
other." [1]

"Berenice" was followed in suc
by other tales and some criticism.
May he wrote to Mr. White, than
kindness: —

"In regard to my critique of Mr. P
seriously feel ashamed of what I hav
intended to give the work a thorough
ine it in detail. Ill health alone pr
doing so. At the time I made the l
you, I was so ill as to be hardly able t
which I wrote, and I finished it in a
exhaustion. I have not, therefore, d
justice to the book, and I am vexed
for Mr. Kennedy has proved himself a
in every respect, and I am sincerely g
many acts of generosity and attention
I am perfectly satisfied with your co
I am — entirely. My poor services
you give me for them." [1]

A month later, in reply to som
by Mr. White, he again wrote: —

[1] Griswold, xxix.

"You ask me if I would be willing
mond if you should have occasion for
the coming winter. I reply that not
greater pleasure. I have been desi
past of paying a visit to Richmond,
of any reasonable excuse for so do
anxious to settle myself in that city, a
you hear of a situation likely to suit
accept it, were the salary even the me
indeed, feel myself greatly indebted
your means I could accomplish this
say in the conclusion of your letter
supervision of proof-sheets, gives me
possibly you might find something f
office. If so, I should be very gl
only a very small portion of my time

In the first of these letters is tl
of ill-health in Poe; but from
quently complains of nervous exh
be ascribed only to the reaction o
ulants on a weakened system.

fects than they afterwards became, accustoming him to surrender at lo intervals to a temptation which, o rendered him irrational and irrespo and left him prostrated. At some ti abandonment by Mr. Allan and hi tion by Mr. Kennedy, the weakest sp had been found. During this perio poor; he was solitary, proud, and de a nervous system extraordinarily s have been permanently weakened privation and mental strain is not u youth of twenty three or four year an hereditary taint in his blood, sho such a vice admits no wonder; and circumstances his frame retained a ceptibility to such influences, even a had come, offers nothing strange to rience. His excesses, however, seer infrequent, and he was now trying temptation. In Mr. Kennedy, to w ently confided all his troubles, he h invigorating friend, and in Mrs. found more motherhood and in her tender affection than he had ever kr no choice but to go to Richmond, have felt that separation from thes cast him back into that state of lo spondency out of which they had hel Virginia was greatly attached to

Clemm had no one else to look to for
Under the circumstances it was not so unn
it was unwise that, before leaving for R
Poe proposed to keep the family united
ing his cousin, and the engagement was
by her mother.

In midsummer, with this understanding
Baltimore apparently without regret, for
little gratitude to that city, nor did he ev
to it to live, although there he was destin
and be buried. He went directly to Richm
the home and associates of his childhood
he doubt that, in spite of the changes in h
there would be pleasant to him; he n
thought that his literary position would co
for his loss of social pretension and the c
tion that attaches to wealth, or even tha
acquaintance would be advantageous to hi
ever this turned out, he entered at once on
as an assistant, although he was not nom
editor until November, at a salary of two

the literary autocrats of their day. press welcomed him loudly. His fo regarded, were in bright contrast t past; but not long after his arriv made as naught, because an obstr the course of true love.

The engagement between Edgar Virginia had come to the ears of h son Poe, who, himself a third cou recently married her half-sister, cousin; and, led by his wife, who t too young to marry (as indeed she born August 15, 1822,[1] and cons turned of thirteen years), he offered his family and care for her unti eighteen, when, if she desired to m would be free to do so. The comm news to Poe had an extraordinary and seems to have cast him into t tion. He wrote to Mrs. Clemm, ploring her not to consent to se Virginia, and appealing to her p such terms that his sincerity cann Some days later, evidently unde ence, he wrote to Mr. Kennedy as

RICHM

DEAR SIR, — I received a letter Miller, in which he tells me you are

1 The Records of St. Paul's Parish, August 13 has some authority by family t

therefore, to write you, and express by let
always found it impossible to express or
sense of gratitude for your frequent and
sistance and kindness. Through your
White has been induced to employ me i
with the editorial duties of his Magazin
five hundred and twenty dollars per annu
tion is agreeable to me for many reasons,
appears to me that nothing can now give
the slightest gratification. Excuse me, m
this letter you find much incoherency.
this moment are pitiable, indeed. I am
a depression of spirits, such as I have n
I have struggled in vain against the influe
ancholy; *you will believe* me, when I say
miserable in spite of the great improve
cumstances. I say you will believe me, a
ple reason, that a man who is writing for
write *thus*. My heart is open before
worth reading, read it. I am wretched
why. Console me, — for you can. But l
or it will be too late. Write me immedia

me than the words of others, for you were my
when no one else was. Fail not, as you value your
of mind hereafter. E. A. P

To this painful letter, exhibiting an unma
spirit, Mr. Kennedy replied: —

"I am sorry to see you in such plight as your
shows you in. It is strange that just at this time,
everybody is praising you, and when fortune is
ning to smile upon your hitherto wretched circumst
you should be invaded by these blue devils. It b
however, to your age and temper to be thus buffe
but be assured, it only wants a little resolution to
the adversary forever. You will doubtless do well
forth in literature, and add to your *comforts*, as
to your reputation, which it gives me great plea
assure you is everywhere rising in popular esteem.'

Probably before receiving this letter Po
Richmond and arrived at Baltimore to ple
suit in person, since on September 22 he
out a license in that city for the marriage.[3]
been said, on the authority of Mrs. Clemm
versation taken down in short-hand, that the
mony was performed by the Rev. John Jol
Old Christ Church, and that the next day H
turned to his duties.[4] If this was actually th

[1] *The Life of John Pendleton Kennedy*, pp. 375, 376.

[2] Griswold, xxix, xxx.

[3] Marriage Records of Baltimore City.

[4] Didier, p. 58. The date of marriage is given as Sept
As Mr. Didier knew nothing of the record of the marriag
granted September 22, the error is of a kind to suppo

the matter was kept very pri
no complete legal proof of th
is not conclusive against its h
the marriage records of Old
badly kept and are very defe
however, that Poe so far succe
that the proposal of Neilson
Mrs. Clemm and her daugh
mond within a few weeks, wh
ued to live together. There
a boarding-house, and with t
the following letter to George

DEAR SIR, — I take the liber
behalf of a mutual relation, M
of Baltimore — and at her earne

You are aware that for many
fering privations and difficulties
I know that you have assisted
and she has occasionally receive
William and Robert Poe, of Au

She is now therefore in Richmond, with he
Virginia, and is, for the present boarding a
of a Mrs. Yarrington. My salary is only
about $800 per ann., and the charge per w
board, (Mrs. Clemm's, her daughter's, and n
$9. I am thus particular in stating my pr
tion that you may be the better enabled t
regard to the propriety of granting the requ
am now about to make for Mrs. Clemm.

It is ascertained that if Mrs. C. could
means of opening, herself, a boarding-house
she could support herself and daughter comf
something to spare. But a small capital w
essary for an undertaking of this nature, a
the widows of our first people are engaged in
it profitable. I am willing to advance, for m
$100, and I believe that Wm. & R. Poe w
$100. If then you would so far aid her in
as to loan her yourself $100 she will have
commence with. I will be responsible for th
of the sum, in a year from this date, if you
convenient to comply with her request.

I beg you, my dear Sir, to take this subject
eration. I feel deeply for the distresses of
and I am sure *you* will feel interested in reli

[Signature cut off.]

P. S. I am the son of David Poe, J
brother.[1]

George Poe sent the money, but th
the plan belongs to a later period.

[1] Poe to George Poe, MS.

From the first Poe had entered with vigor, and he soon took enti magazine. Besides fulfilling the r tracting duties incident to mere e tributed tales, poems, and reviews signed, as well as compendious a though unclaimed are clearly fro considerable portion of this matte ten before he came to Richmond mass is so large as to prove that diligent than facile author. Much of slight importance then, and no terested in little more of it than the seven new tales, "Loss of Pest," "Shadow," "Metzengerst L'Omelette," "Epimanes," and " salem," which he added to the seve

These fourteen, presumably all "Tales of the Folio Club," which house had so long held under con

secret disease, given to the use of drugs a
musing over old books in an antiquated and g
chamber, and reserved for a horrible exper
In it, too, are such themes of evil fascinatio
his mind as the epileptic patient and the pren
burial; such marks of his handling as the c
ship of the principal actors, the descripti
morbid physical changes, the minute analy
sensations, the half-superstitious reference t
tempsychosis, and the vivid analysis of the
of drugs; and such traits of literary style
absence of conversation, the theatrically elab
scene of the action, the speed of the narrativ
its sudden and yet carefully prepared catast
"Berenice" reveals a mind at once ana
and constructive, in which the imagination
dominant faculty and a taste for sensuous e
melodramatic incidents, and fantastic sugge
is the most shaping influence. Defective
tale is in refinement — Poe never but once inc
again in a *dénoûment* of such mere physical
— it exhibits, in however crude a form, the
ity to conceive startling imaginative effects
select the right means to bring them about di
forcibly, and without observation; in a wo
tistic power. In the Venetian story of "Th
ionary," now known as "The Assignation," th
more of splendid coloring, of the purely spect
and decorative element; in the Hungarian m
"Metzengerstein" there is a more violent ar

superstition; in "Morella"—
volting victory of that aspirin
dying mother's spirit, passing
babe, retained in that childish
ligence and ripe passions of w
a solemn and breathless drea
ing of a vague but sure terro
traits individualize the three
them is there the finely wro
"Berenice." All yield, how
with the fifth and last of the e
the parable called "Shadow,"
row limits of a page or two,
noble and most artistic expres
nation during the first period
furthermore is alone distinguis
and delicacy of transition tha
prose style. The elements in th
are simple and massive, the a
keeping; the fine monotone of
emotion in the breasts of the

any familiar thing," — the vague, form
that was not indifferent to the low-voi
tion of Oinos, but spoke and told its dwel
and its appellation; "and then did we,
start from our seats in horror, and stand t
and shuddering, and aghast, for the ton
voice of the shadow were not the tones o
being, but of a multitude of beings, and,
their cadences from syllable to syllable, fe
upon our ears in the well-remembered an
accents of many thousand departed friend

Perhaps the "MS. Found in a Bottle,"
as from Miss Eliza Leslie's annual, "T
full as it is of fantasy and magnificent sce
of ocean views, should be placed among
of pure imagination; it stands slightly a
them only because it has some relation
those stories, partly of adventure, partly
which Poe built rather out of his acquir
edge than his dreams. Of this class "Ha
the narrative of a voyage to the moon, i
complete type. The idea of such a pas
the earth to its nearest neighbor in spa
novel, nor was the astronomical inform
volved by any means abstruse, being fu
fact by Herschel's popular treatise, then
lished in America; but Poe claimed that
of making a fiction plausible by the use o
facts and principles was original, and h
worked it out with great patience and skill

a high degree of scientific cons
without obligation to an obscure
a providence unknown to physic
the balloonist's fate; but, with al
it exhibits for the first time th
cidity of Poe's intelligence as
his imagination, and proves tha
a considerable power of appli
noteworthy, too, as the earliest o
gull the public, for which he afte
torious. At the time it was les
respect than the celebrated "M
Locke, published a few weeks
York Sun," which made fools
telligent citizens and caused Po
he showed in his later commen
so many more people were take
"Hans Pfaall," while he had put
more pains than Mr. Locke to
tainly if verisimilitude were the g
folly in c uli v. he deserv d be

"Bon-Bon," in which he plays his pa
bal of human souls. Some are satirica
them is to be reckoned one of his wea
tions, "Loss of Breath, A Tale *à la*
which in its first form, with its exp
tive of the hanging and the burial al
perceptibly aimed at the inane jargo
then thought) of German metaphysi
them, too, Poe is less original than
tales; he shows more plainly the trace
ing. "King Pest" is very closely mo
ian Grey's adventure in the castle o
Duke of Johannisberger (the cabinet
of Little Lilliput in the same novel
double of the Saracen's horse in Me
tapestry); and "Lionizing," a sketc
repeatedly and elaborately corrected i
apart from its Shandean touch, co
and conception "Too Beautiful for A
Bulwer's "The Ambitious Student i
and other Papers," apparently a fav

But it was as a critic, not as an im
humorous author, that Poe made the
that placed the new Southern monthly
side the "Knickerbocker" and the
lander" as a national magazine. Wh
more he had contributed a few perfu
notices, but only when he was publicl
editor did he, to use the expression o
porary, "fall in with his broad-axe."
fall of 1835 there appeared the loudly
much-bepuffed "Norman Leslie," one
ular novels of its day; it was ambit
and foolish, but its pretentiousness see
ticular quality which led Poe to singl
an example. In the issue for Decembe
he subjected it to such scrutiny as had
known in our country before, and he
so trenchantly and convincingly, with
and effect, that the public were widely
they bought, read, and looked for

soon found a stand making against
was some show at first of closing the
columns, with gentleman-like contemp
monstrance against the insult; but a
"Mirror," after several insidious attac
openly, to wit: —

"☞ Those who have read the notices
books in a certain 'southern' monthly wh
to gain notoriety by the loudness of its al
amusement in the sketch, in another page,
Successful Novel.' The Southern Litera
knows ☞ *by experience* ☜ what it is t
cessless novel. ☜" [1]

The sketch referred to was a clever
style of Poe's "Lionizing," and while
attention to the minutiæ of style ar
ness to cry plagiarism somewhat in a j
ner, as if the word were his whole st
insinuated further that the Harpers
Poe's longer, as the "Mirror" itself ha

This trivial incident drew from Poe a state
the spirit in which he believed himself to b
taking the reform of criticism, and the gr
his action : —

" There was a time, it is true, when we c
foreign opinion — let us even say when we pa
servile deference to British critical dicta.
American book could, by any possibility, b
perusal, was an idea by no means extensively
in the land ; and if we were induced to read
productions of our native writers, it was only
peated assurances from England that such pr
were not altogether contemptible . . . Not so,
with our present follies. We are becoming b
and arrogant in the pride of a too speedily ass
erary freedom. We throw off with the most pr
ous and unmeaning hauteur, *all* deference wh
foreign opinion — we forget, in the puerile inf
vanity, that *the world* is the true theatre of the
histrio — we get up a hue and cry about the ne
encouraging native writers of merit — we blin

often find ourselves involved in the gross pa
ing a stupid book the better, because, sure
stupidity is American." [1]

These views were by no means novel o
The periodical press was frequently w
padded with essays, reports of lectures,
remarks, endeavoring to explain the fe
American criticism, and deprecating it.
the "Knickerbocker" itself ascribes m
not confined, perhaps, to that period, s
interests of publishers, the social relati
ors, the wish to encourage the young,
being esteemed unpatriotic, and the li
distinguished Poe was the audacity wit
took the unenvied post, and the vigor
he struck. Undoubtedly his worldly fo
affected by the enmities he thus made.
Yorkers never forgave him. Colonel
the "Commercial Advertiser," and W
Clarke, of the "Philadelphia Gazette,"
him, and in the house of his friends the

sustained. Moreover, the severity, what is
the venom and heartlessness, of these critiqu
been much exaggerated; there were in all b
like that upon "Norman Leslie," and thes
milder than the first, a fact very creditable
when one recollects how loudly he was urg
hang, draw, and Quarterly," and how aptly
literary temper fell in with the proud sel
dence of his nature. His end was justice,
manner was not courtesy.

In fact, his reputation as a critic woul
suffer rather for the mercy he showed than
vengeance he took. With what hesitancy
gests that Mrs. Sigourney might profitably
Mrs. Hemans; with what consideration he
fault in Mrs. Ellet, or just notices a blem
Miss Gould; with what respect he treats
and Gallagher! And if he asserts that Dral
an analogical rather than a creative mind, a
sinuates that Halleck's laurel was touched

of Poe's patience and of the alertn
of his mental curiosity. Here an
sees signs of his growth, as when
enthusiasm Godwin and Coleridg
raeli, and Scott; or one finds the
culiar individuality, the early bent
when he mentions the love of anal
this author, and whispers to the n
verisimilitude by obscuring the
the general in the naturalness and
particular. In especial some pro
his poetic theory, but this must
self.

He had reprinted without a sig
ter to B——" from the 1831 edit
with the editorial remark that "o
not be called upon to indorse all
ions." To the somewhat bald
advanced, that poetry should aim
be brief, indefinite, and musical, h
thing to add in a peculiar dialect

glories of Heaven — and, mingle
this love and this admiration of
the unconquerable desire — *to kn*
timent of Intellectual Happiness
a higher Intellectual Happiness
tion is its soul. With the *passio*
though it may modify them great
exalt, or inflame, or purify, or co
require little ingenuity to prove th
and indeed no necessary co-existe
hesitate to say that a man high
powers of Causality — that is to
physical acumen — will, even with
of Ideality, compose a finer poem
should, by its measure of exciting
than one who, without such meta
be gifted, in the most extraordi
faculty of Ideality. For a poem
ulty, but *the means* of exciting it

Poe's meaning may not be e
sight, built up as it is out of
elements, which he derived ma

passes them. Beauty is thus a revelatio
nite truth, seized only by the imaginatior
consequently, according to Poe's view at
makes its highest appeal to the intelle
of the passions, and requires imaginat
than sympathetic power in both its mak
readers.

The remainder of his proposition am
to saying that one who is able to analy
ments which give rise to his own experie
vision that poetry brings, and thus to di
such moods are caused, can by forethougl
and combine these elements as to arous
state in others, whereas one who is mer
tible to such experience might not be
reproducing it with certainty: the latt
poetic temperament, the former has i
the analytical power which is necessa
one is the creature, the other the mas
inspiration. All this, which means that
cient Mariner" had been written by C

cism or his metaphysical acumen,
lesson he learned from Schlegel,
in support of his pet canon, that
brief. "In pieces of less extent,
pleasure is *unique*, in the proper a
term — the understanding is empl
ficulty, in the contemplation of
whole — and thus its effect will
great degree, upon the perfection
the nice adaptation of its consti
especially upon what is rightly ter
the *unity or totality of interest*
first expression of Poe's intellectu
form, the quality in which his earl
defective and his latest most emin

The new poems which were
"Messenger," out of his composi
were the five scenes from that a
"Politian," the "Hymn" in "More
"To ——" in "The Visionary,"

haps, marks the nadir of Poe's des
prosaic, tasteless, and absurd: —

"And thus they said I plighted
An irrevocable vow,
And my friends are all delighted
That I his love have requited,
And my mind is much benighted
If I am not happy now."

It is hardly necessary to add that
judgment of the poet canceled the
would it be useful to revive their m
not to give, by a striking example, a
once for all of the real worthlessne
Poe's early work. Of his old poems
in the "Messenger," in forms more o
"Irene," "A Pæan," "The Valle
Helen," "To Science," "Israfel," "
Sin," from the New York volume
Coliseum," a fragment of "Politia
Baltimore "Saturday Visiter."

The paucity of Poe's poetic prod
editing the "Messenger" may be laid

used. The paper was well reason
that its author had a quick and obs
it has been vastly overrated, as an
vince himself by comparing it mi
David Brewster's "Letters on Nat
which it stands confessedly obliged,
it is partly paraphrased. Another
kidia," being selections from Poe'
book, is worth a moment's detentic
it incidentally throws on his habit
In prefacing the clippings (which
but very unfortunate misprint, ne
rected in any edition of his works,
be original instead of *not* original),
foreign magazines extracts of this
taken "by wholesale from such wor
liothèque des Memorabilia Literaria
des Bon (sic) Pensées,' the 'Lettre
Curieuses,' the 'Literary Memoirs
the 'Mélanges Litéraires' of Suar

"Schlegel's Lectures on the Dran
nished some extracts to the body of
there alone it occurs, the translator
rendering "Suard und Andre" (
Suard and others; Poe innocentl
and so tripped. The satirical youn
to say that "Disraeli's 'Curiositie
'Literary Character,' and 'Calami
have of late years proved exceedi
to some little American pilferers i
are now becoming too generally kno
with he takes from this same conv
several fine bits, including nearly
plagiarisms of the poets.[1] Similar
disingenuousness of Poe, the flimsi
tended scholarship, and his readines
from others by easy paraphrase o
his career.

In Poe's private life during the
of his residence at Richmond the
was his public marriage to his cousi

1836, having secured one Thomas W
his surety, he gave a marriage bond
quired; and Cleland was further oblig
take oath before the deputy clerk, Ch
" that Virginia E. Clemm is of th
twenty-one years, and a resident of th
The ceremony was performed on the
same day at the boarding-house of t
the Rev. Amasa Converse, a Presby
ter, then editor of the "Southern L
graph." [2] Mrs. Clemm, whom the mi
bered as "being polished, dignified, a
in her bearing," was present, and ga
freely; the bride, too, had a pleasing
seemed to him very young.[3] Virgin
slightly under fourteen. Poe was tw

At this time it was expected that
who had not abandoned her plan
boarding-house, would rent a house
chased by Mr. White, and would l
and family as well as the newly-marri

consequent financial embarrassment,]
Kennedy on June 7, and asked a loan
dred dollars for six months in order to
for the same amount due in three mon
the money advanced by George Poe i
which he declared was his only debt.
he said, was fifteen dollars a week, a
vember was to be twenty; and added
senger is thriving beyond all expect
myself have every prospect of success.'
probably acceded to this request; but
was, the little family took up their ab
and were temporarily, at least, well pr

Poe might now justly regard his futu
The "Messenger" had so prospered u
agement that it was an assûred succ
likely to afford him a constantly incre
His reputation was steadily growing
Paulding declared him the best of t
perhaps of the old writers; the South
vociferous in its praises, and Poe, wh

magazine for 1837 an
tention being called
decline, with the prese
ties of the 'Messenge
White added that the
January 3, but woul
uting articles from tir
nearly one third of th
tavo pages, was by Po
published no original
and no poem since A
there was usually no
that the October issu
of both editor and p
issue by a press of
there is a very marke
voted to reviews. So
matter by the followi

My dear Edgar:
guage as this occasion

your past life make me dread a speed
separation. If you would make yourse
quarters in my house, or with any oth
where liquor is not used, I should think
hope for you. But if you go to a taver
where it is used at table, you are not
fine talents, Edgar, and you ought t
spected, as well as yourself. Learn to
and you will soon find that you are res
yourself from the bottle, and from bottle
ever. Tell me if you can and will do
become an assistant in my office, it mu
that all engagements on my part cease
get drunk. I am your true friend.

The circumstance to which this
dently belongs to an early period in
and was antecedent to his marriage
suggested that the direct cause of F
was Mr. White's declining to all
wages or a share in the profits of
but both the demand and the refusa
positions. It is possible that his h
by his rapid and brilliant success,
less solicitous to retain his post, p
has been asserted,[2] he had receive
from Dr. Francis L. Hawks, a No
vine settled in New York city, to c
newly projected "New York Revie
it is recollected that Mr. White wa

[1] Griswold, xxx.

friend, and must have required on bu
very strong reasons to make him pa
itor who had proved his capacity b
"Messenger" the good investment it
did mind it seems more probable th
dinary effects of Poe's fits of intoxic
infrequent, the irregularity they caus
and the exhaustion they left behind
real ground for Mr. White's determ
his protégé go. Mr. Kennedy, wh
known the facts, writes in reference t
of Poe's life, "He was irregular,
querulous, and soon gave up his plac
self afterwards confessed, as will b
Richmond he gave way at long inter
tion, and after each excess was inva
to his bed for some days. The only
reference by him to this matter occu
letter, in which, although it was w
after his resignation went into effect

was not suddenly or violently effe
parted friends, and Mr. White con
out life to speak of Poe with grea
warm feeling. When the matter
wrote to his old friend Wilmer, who
Baltimore, that if he would come t
position would be given to him.[1] T
unable to do, and it fell to the lo
editor to wonder why Poe, who soo
furnished no more installments of
tive, "Arthur Gordon Pym," whicl
begun in the "Messenger."

[1] *Our Press Gang*, p. 40

CHAPTER

IN PHILADELP

On leaving Richmond Poe
his family by slow stages thr
Philadelphia to New York, wh
residence at 113½ Carmine Stre
there with the expectation of ob
ployment from the editor of t
view," he was soon undeceived.
of that magazine had appeare
financial panic that then swe
made the enterprise more diffi
and the second issue was dela
In this was a notice by Poe of

original knowledge. Of this passage most learned in appearance that he e was proud, and he reprinted it at e opportunity throughout his life. Tl whoever furnished it, was sound, an tions of Keith the objectional paragr ted. So far as is known Poe did r tribute to the theological quarterly.

He gave his attention during this pally to the "Narrative of Arthur G which was announced by the Har 1838, and was published at the end c of the sea, under the influence of Co ryatt, were then at the height of th and many grew up and withered in lecting his subject, however, Poe w adopting the literary fashion, but wi adroitness of the born magazinist he the momentary curiosity of the pub highly interested in Antarctic explor

[1] *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, of N* ing the Details of a Mutiny and Atrocious But American Brig Grampus, on her Way to the So Account of the Recapture of the Vessel by th Shipwreck, and subsequent Horrible Sufferir their Deliverance by means of the British Scl the brief Cruise of this latter Vessel in the An Capture, and the Massacre of her Crew among in the 84th parallel of Southern latitude ; to credible Adventures and Discoveries still furth that distressing Calamity gave rise. 12mo, pp Harper & Brothers, 1838.

sequence of the expedition then
the auspices of the government.
quainted with the chief projector,
had found some attraction in the
first. He had reviewed the Con
on the matter and twice written
it while still editor of the "Mess
way his attention was originally dr
ject, and in course of time the new
was published, apparently on the
of Mr. Paulding.[1]

The narrative is circumstantial
seem plausible to the unreflecting
although there are a few tell-tale s
the fifth chapter Augustus, who die
is said to have revealed some ma
only in later years. Its credibility
so strange, nor the realistic art
might be thought, since portions
suggested from other lately printe
Irving's "Astoria," or directly co

and huddled up together; the entomb
thur in the hold, where he suffers eve
sible to his situation, from starvation t
by a mad dog, the butchery of the m
sickening riot, the desperate fight betw
factions on board, poison, shipwreck,
among friends, make the staple of the
Pym's adventures; some portions, such
guise of Pym as a putrescent corpse,
carrion men with the feeding gull, o
of Augustus's death, are so revoltingly
merely physically disgusting, that one
understand how even Poe could endur
or develop them. Death in every fea
the constant theme; even after the shi
Southern regions the author diversif
graphical and botanical extracts only b
hension of living inhumation, or the an
sensation of falling down a precipice,
murder. Poe's touch is noticeable he
throughout, it is true, but he does not s

erns of the hieroglyphs are suggested by the
written mountains; but after the voyagers l
island and are drawn on toward the pole, th
ling scenery, by which expectation is raised
highest pitch without loss of vagueness, for
of his most original and powerful landscape

The volume was noticed by the press, l
little success in this country, and the au
course, derived no profit from its reprint l
nam in England, where the country public
to have been hoaxed by it. The only inc
the family at this time seems to have b
rived from Mrs. Clemm's keeping boarders,
whom, Mr. William Gowans, a bookseller, c
that for the eight months or more during
he lived with the family he never saw Poe
wise than sober, courteous, and gentlemanly.
Clemm's earnings seem to have been no mo
sufficient, since Poe, when in the summer
cided to remove to Philadelphia, was forced

Brooks had bought Fairfield's review, "
American Quarterly Magazine" of Bal
was to continue it as a monthly unde
of the "American Museum of Literatu
Arts." To these he had already contri
geia," composed probably in the pas
which appeared in the first number, in
and was followed by the satirical ex
"The Signora Psyche Zenobia — The
Time" ("How to write a Blackwood A
"A Predicament") in December, two
"Literary Small Talk" in January, as
in February, and the poem "The Haunt
in April; in the fall he had also sent fo
timore Book," an annual edited by Car
Arthur, "Siope" ("Silence"), a fine p
aginative prose which was saved from
basket by the intercession of Brooks.
he received very little pay, — not more t
ten dollars an article, if anything at all.

The mention which Poe made of enga
Philadelphia refers probably to his te
Conchology, upon which he was emplo
the winter. This volume[1] has given

[1] *The Conchologist's First Book: or, a System
Malacology*, arranged expressly for the use of sch
the animals, according to Cuvier, are given with
great number of new species added, and the whole
accurately as possible, to the present condition of th
Edgar A. Poe. With illustrations of two hundred an
presenting a correct type of each genus. Philadelp

in his lifetime that the work was a simple reprint of an English book, Captain Thomas Brown's "Conchology," which Poe had the effrontery to copyright in this country as his own. He indignantly denied the accusation, and said: —

"I wrote the Preface and Introduction, and translated from Cuvier the accounts of the animals, &c. *All* school-books are necessarily made in a similar way." [1]

What Poe's understanding was of the manner in which authors of school-books use their authorities may be seen from his own words: —

"It is the practice of quacks to paraphrase page after page, rearranging the order of paragraphs, making a slight alteration in point of fact here and there, but preserving the spirit of the whole, its information, erudition, etc., etc., while everything is so completely *rewritten* as to leave no room for a direct charge of plagiarism and this is *considered and lauded as originality*. Now, he who, in availing himself of the labors of his predecessors (and it is clear that all scholars *must* avail themselves of such labors) — he who shall copy *verbatim* the passages to be desired, without attempt at palming off their spirit as original with himself, is certainly no plagiarist, even if he fail to make *direct* acknowledgment of indebted

for the author, by Haswell, Barrington & Haswell, and for sale by the principal booksellers in the United States. 1839. 12mo pp. 156.

[1] Poe to ———, Ingram, i. 168.

ness, — is unquestionably *less* of the plagiarist than the disingenuous and contemptible quack who wriggles himself, as above explained, into a reputation for originality, a reputation quite out of place in a case of this kind — the public, of course, never caring a straw whether he be original or not." [1]

In this passage Poe wrote from experience; for in the parts of the "Conchologist's First Book" which he claims as his own both methods are pursued. The first is illustrated by the "Introduction," (pp. 3-8), which is a close paraphrase from Brown's [2] volume, the thoughts being identical in both, their sequence similar, and the authorities quoted the same. The second is illustrated by the plates, which are copied from Brown, and by the "Explanation of the Parts of Shells" (pp. 9-20), which is *verbatim* from the same source, and the "classification," which is reprinted from "Wyatt's Conchology," [3] a large and expensive volume published the preceding year, to which Poe acknowledges his obligations in his preface. In the body of the work,

[1] *Works*, ii. 46.

[2] *The Conchologist's Text-Book.* Embracing the arrangements of Lamarck and Linnæus, with a glossary of technical terms. By Captain Thomas Brown, Fellow, etc., etc. Illustrated by 19 engravings on steel. Fourth edition. Glasgow: Archibald Fullarton & Co. 1837.

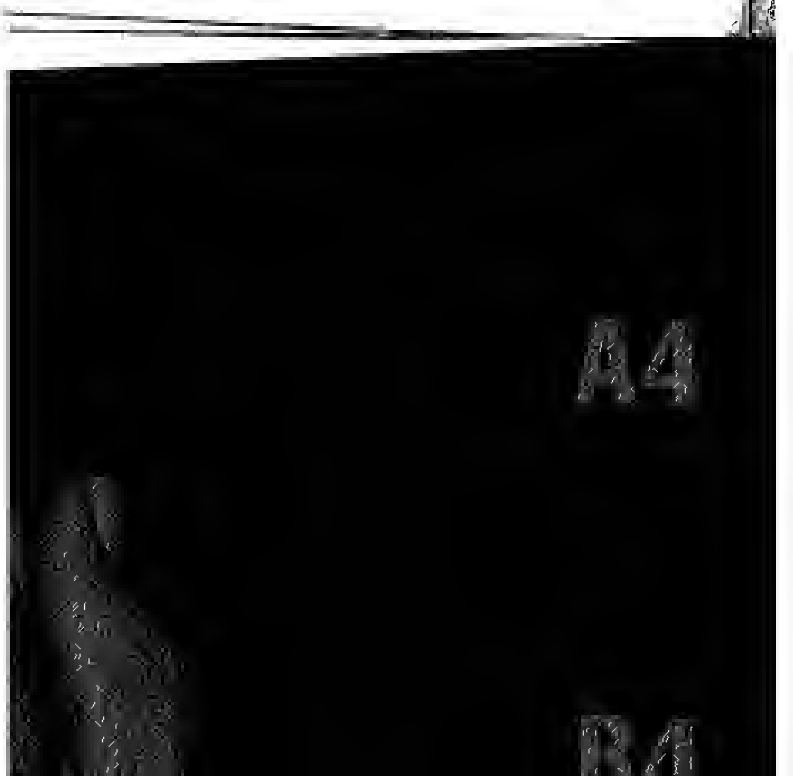
[3] *A Manual of Conchology according to the System laid down by Lamarck, with the Late Improvements of De Blainville. Exemplified and arranged for the Use of Students.* By Thomas Wyatt, M. A. Illustrated by 36 plates, etc., etc. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1838.

zoology more free; and the description of the animals is, as Poe stated, translated from Cuvier. The volume concludes with an original glossary and an index from Wyatt.

These being the facts as they are shown by a direct comparison of all the books involved, there can be no doubt that the real state of the case is given by Professor John G. Anthony, of Harvard College, who received his information from Wyatt. The latter said that as his work of the previous year proved too expensive for the public, and as the Harpers refused to bring it out in a cheaper form, it was determined to publish a new book which should be sufficiently different from the former to escape any suit for the infringement of copyright; and Poe was selected to father it.[1] This is supported by the fact that Wyatt, who went about lecturing on the subject, carried the volume with him for sale. It was copyrighted in Poe's name, and appeared about April, 1839, when it was favorably noticed by the press.[2] The most that can be said for Poe is that he shared the responsibility with others, unless, indeed, some one should be

[1] Professor John G. Anthony to John Parker, June 22, 1875. MS.

[2] *Saturday Evening Chronicle and Mirror of the Times*, Philadelphia, April 27, 1839.



too, with a translation and digest of Lomonnier's "Natural History," which was published the same spring under Wyatt's name; but there is no indication that he had any hand in this work except his own statement, in reviewing it, that he spoke "from personal knowledge, and the closest inspection and collation."[1]

While this volume was in preparation Poe had begun to establish some connection with the city press, perhaps by the assistance of Wilmer, who was now pursuing his checkered journalistic career in Philadelphia, and on May 8 he published the grotesque sketch of "The Devil in the Belfry," in the "Saturday Evening Chronicle." In one way and another he made his name known at least locally, and found work to do, however humble and ill paid. One E. Burke Fisher, an old contributor to the "Messenger," who in May of this year had ventured with another sanguine man, Mr. W. Whitney, to start a magazine, "The Literary Examiner and Western Monthly Review," at Pittsburg, then at the extreme confines of the American literary world, made him an offer of four dollars a page for critical reviews; but as Fisher published the single article which he received editorially, and with emendations of his own, it led only to Poe's

[1] *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, v. 62 (July, 1839)

declaring that "no greater scamp ever lived," [1] and congratulating himself that the magazine died the next month without circulating its fourth number. He took the insult probably with a more cheerful if not a higher spirit because he had already obtained permanent employment and a fresh opportunity to distinguish himself as an editor.

In July, 1837, William Evans Burton, an English comedian who was ambitious of winning literary as well as histrionic fame in his adopted country, had launched "The Gentleman's Magazine" in the very darkest period of the financial depression, and with singular felicity he had succeeded in his venture. At first this periodical, which he both owned and edited, was characterized by the lightest of stories and the most sluggish of poems; it was padded with clippings, translations, and the usual *et cætera* of its kind, including the scrappy reviews, made principally by the scissors, that then went under the name of criticism; but Burton devoted himself to developing local talent, and the Philadelphia editors, novelists, and poetasters, male and female, stood by their patron. The fourth volume began, in 1839, with golden promises of better printing, elegant engravings, and contributions from a long list of writers, in which, beside the names of Leigh Hunt, Douglas Jerrold, and James Montgomery, whose wares were presumably stolen, figured the patronymics of thirty-two native au-

[1] Poe to J. E. Snodgrass, July 12, 1841. MS. copy.

thors, for the most part of Philadelphian or Southern extraction, now all alike impartially forgotten. Poe's friends, Wilmer and Brooks, were among them, but he himself was not mentioned. Once indeed, in the previous September, he had come under the notice of the magazine, but only anonymously as the author of "Arthur Gordon Pym," in which capacity he had been flippantly treated. There is no evidence, and not the least likelihood, that he wrote to anything for Burton until July, when his name was printed in conjunction with the former's as associate editor of the periodical whose variable title was then "Burton's Gentleman's Magazine and American Monthly Review."

The paucity of Poe's early contributions goes to confirm this view. In the first number he printed nothing of his own except some old poems and a few brief book notices; and at the close of the year the only original work done by him exclusively for "Burton's," besides numerous but entirely perfunctory reviews, consisted of one sonnet, conjecturally his, though never afterwards acknowledged, and three tales, "The Man that was Used Up," "The Fall of the House of Usher," and "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion." "William Wilson" was reprinted from "The Gift" for 1840, and "Morella" from the "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque,"[1] published at the end of the year.

[1] *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque.* By Edgar A. Poe. In two volumes. Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard. 1840. 16mo.

This collection of Poe's stories was in two volumes, and included all those thus far mentioned, and in addition the grotesque "Von Jung" and "Why the Little Frenchman wears his Hand in a Sling," making twenty-five in all. The publishers, Lea & Blanchard, with whom he had previously had some slight correspondence in 1836 in regard to some rejected manuscripts, engaged, September 28, 1839, to print an edition of 750 copies, on condition that Poe should have the copyright and a few copies (afterwards limited to twenty) for distribution among his friends, and they should have the profits. When the volume was nearly ready Poe endeavored to obtain better terms, and in reply received the following letter, which may account for his professed indifference at a later time regarding the fate of the tales: —

November 20, 1839.

EDGAR A. POE, — We have your note of to-day. The copyright of the Tales would be of no value to us; when we undertook their publication, it was solely

The work was copyrighted in 1839, and was dedicated to Colonel William Drayton. Vol. i. (pp. 243) contained a preface and fourteen tales, that is, Morella, Lionizing, William Wilson, The Man that was Used Up, The Fall of the House of Usher, The Duc De L'Omelette, MS. Found in a Bottle, Bon-Bon, Shadow, The Devil in the Belfry, Ligeia, King Pest, The Signora Zenobia (How to write a Blackwood Article), The Scythe of Time (A Predicament). Vol. ii. (pp. 228) contained Epimanes, Siope, Hans Pfaall, A Tale of Jerusalem, Von Jung, Loss of Breath, Metzengerstein, Berenice, Why the Little Frenchman wears his Hand in a Sling, The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion. Appendix.

to oblige you and not with any view to profit, and on this ground it was urged by you. We should not therefore be now called upon or expected to purchase the copyright when we have no expectation of realizing the Capital placed in the volumes. If the offer to publish was now before us we should certainly decline it, and would feel obliged if you knew and would urge some one to relieve us from the publication at cost, or even at a small abatement.[1]

The volumes appeared early in December, and were widely and favorably noticed by the city press and in New York. The sale, however, was not large, and after Poe's own copies were dispatched he broke off intercourse with the firm for some time.

Three of these reprinted stories deserve some further notice. Two of them, "Ligeia" and "The Fall of the House of Usher," mark the highest reach of the romantic element in Poe's genius, and for the first time exhibit his artistic powers in full development and under easy command. He had matured in the six years since he penned his first story (he was now thirty), but his growth had been within singularly well-defined limits; his mind pursued the strong attraction that fascinated him in that haunted borderland upon the verge but not beyond the sphere of credibility, as the magnet obeys the pole; but this absorption of his imagination in the preternatural was not more extraordinary than the monotony of the themes that exercised

[1] Letter-Book of Lea & Blanchard.

it. In plot "Ligeia" is the same as "Morella," and "The Fall of the House of Usher" the same as "Berenice;" in each a single dramatic event had gathered about it in Poe's mind rich accretions of fancy, thought, and suggestiveness, but practically there was no change except in treatment,— in the art by which the effect originally sought was secured more finely, and in an intenser and more elemental form. In all his best work, however, Poe not only told a story, he also developed an idea, and his later renderings of early conceptions are markedly characterized by an increase in this suggested, or, as he designated it, mystic, meaning.

In "Ligeia," which he regarded as his finest tale, he re-wrote "Morella," but for much of its peculiar power he went back to the sources of his youngest inspiration. In "Al Aaraaf" he had framed out of the breath of the night-wind and the idea of the harmony of universal nature a fairy creature, —

"Ligeia, Ligeia, my beautiful one!"

Now by a finer touch he incarnated the motions of the breeze and the musical voices of nature in the form of a woman: but the Lady Ligeia has still no human quality; her aspirations, her thoughts and capabilities, are those of a spirit; the very beam and glitter and silence of her ineffable eyes belong to the visionary world. She is, in fact, the maiden of Poe's dream, the Eidolon he served, the air-woven divinity in which he believed; for he had the true myth-making faculty, the power to make

his senses aver what his imagination perceived. In revealing through "Ligeia" the awful might of the soul in the victory of its will over death and in the eternity of its love, Poe worked in the very element of his reverie, in the liberty of a world as as he would have it. Upon this story he lavished all his poetic, inventive, and literary skill, and at last perfected an exquisitely conceived work, and made it, within its own laws, as faultless as humanity can fashion. He did not once lapse into the crude or repulsive; he blended the material elements of the legend, the mere circumstance and decoration of the scene, like married notes of a sensuous accompaniment, and modulated them with minute and delicate care to chime with the weird suggestions of the things above nature, until all unites and vanishes in an impression on the spirit, — in an intimation of the dark possibilities that lie hidden in the eternal secret, adumbrated in the startling event when the raven hair of Ligeia streams down beneath the serpentine flames of the writhing censer, and her eyes open full on her lost lover, as they stand embosomed within the wind-swayed golden hangings whereon the ghastly and sable phantasmagoria keeps up its antic and ceaseless dance. Without striving to unwind the mazes of the spell that confuses the reader into momentary belief in the incredible, one cannot but note the marvelous certainty with which Poe passes from vaguely suggestive and slightly unusual mutations

of the senses, and advances by imperceptible gradations to accustom the mind to increasingly strange and complex changes, incessant and seemingly lawless variations, until one is fairly bewildered into accepting the final impossible transformation of the immortal into mortality as merely the final phase of the restless movement in all, and afterwards, on returning to the solid world, can scarcely tell where he overstepped the boundaries of reality.

As in "Ligeia" the idea of change is elaborated, so in "The Fall of the House of Usher" the intellectual theme is fear. For the purposes of this story Poe used again the plot of "Berenice," but so purified and developed in its accidents as to be hardly recognizable. Not a few would rank this tale more high than "Ligeia;" for, if that be more distinguished by ideality, this is more excellent in the second virtue in Poe's scale, unity of design. In artistic construction, it does not come short of absolute perfection. The adaptation of the related parts and their union in the total effect are a triumph of literary craft; the intricate details, as it were mellowing and reflecting one ground tone, have the definiteness and precision of inlaid mosaic, or, like premonitions and echoes of the theme in music, they are so exactly calculated as to secure their end with the certainty of harmonic law itself. The sombre landscape whose hues Poe alone knew the secret of; the subtle yet not overwrought sympathy between the mansion and the race that had

reared it; the looks, traits, and pursuits of Usher, its representative; and the at first scarce-felt presence of Madeline, his worn sister, — all is like a narrowing and ever-intensifying force drawing in to some unknown point; and when this is reached, in the bright copper-sheathed vault in which Madeline is entombed, and the mind, after that midnight scene, expands and breathes freer air, a hundred obscure intimations, each slight in itself, startle and enchain it, until, slowly as obscurity takes shape in a glimmer of light, Usher's dread discloses itself in its concrete and fearful fulfillment, and at once, by the brief and sudden stroke of death, house, race, and all sink into the black tarn where its glassy image had so long built a shadowy reality.

Where every syllable tells, it is folly to attempt an analysis of the workmanship. By way of illustration, however, it may be well to remark on the mode in which the mind is prepared for the coming of Madoline, and made almost to share Usher's diseased acuteness of hearing, by the legendary tale, with its powerful and exclusive appeal to the senses; or to observe such a slight touch as the small picture painted by Usher, — the interior of a long rectangular tunnel, deep in the earth, with low, smooth walls, closed and without a torch, yet flooded with intense rays, — so clearly prophetic of Madeline's vault, gleaming with metallic lustre, of which, too, some reminiscence still survives in the mind when the same unnatural luminous exhala-

tion glows from the under-surface of the storm clouds that press upon the turrets of the trembling house before its fall. Never has the impression of total destruction, of absolute and irremediable ruin, been more strongly given; had the mansion remained, it would seem as if the extinction of Usher had been incomplete. Doom rests upon all things within the shadow of those walls; it is felt to be impending; and therefore, Poe, identifying himself with his reader, places the sure seal of truth on the illusion as he exclaims, "From that chamber and from that mansion I fled aghast." The mind is already upon the recoil as it turns to view the accomplished fatality.

These two tales deserve more attention in that they are in Poe's prose what "The Raven" and "Ulalume" are in his poetry, the richest of his imaginative work. On them he expended his spirit. There had been no such art before in America; but, like Hawthorne, he had to wait for any adequate recognition of his genius. His work in this kind was done; it could be left, safe as the diamond.

In "William Wilson" he opened a new vein. It is the first of his studies of the springs of terror in conscience. The idea itself which is developed in the story, the conception of a double dogging one's steps and thwarting one's evil designs, is an old fancy[1] of men that has taken many shapes

[1] It has been suggested (Ingram and Stoddard) that this tale

since Zoroaster saw his phantom in the garden. The psychological element in it is less insisted on than is usual in Poe's finest work, and it consequently lacks the intensity and spiritual power of his later sketches on similar subjects. It has a peculiar interest as containing an autobiographical account of his school-days in England, but in his own life there was little to serve as a basis for other portions of the narrative.

Poe had already formed the habit, which no author ever practiced so flagrantly, of republishing old material slightly if at all revised. With the exception of the fine sonnet entitled "Silence," all his poetic contributions to "Burton's" were of this sort; the 1829 edition of his poems afforded "Spirits of the Dead,"[1] "Fairyland,"[2] and "To the River ——,"[2] and the "Messenger" yielded "To Ianthe in Heaven" and "To ——,"[1] the stanzas originally addressed to Eliza White. At the beginning of the New Year he applied the same con-

was from a rare drama by Calderon, *El Embozado* or *El Capotado*, mentioned by Medwin to Irving, and vainly sought for by the latter in Spanish libraries. (*Irving's Life and Letters*, ii. 232; iv. 70-72.) Medwin undoubtedly had the plot from Shelley. The reference is plainly to *El Purgatorio de San Patricio*, a favorite of Shelley's (from which he took a passage of *The Cenci*), in which Un Hombre Embozado is a character. Poe read Medwin's *Shelley*; but it is extremely unlikely that he ever saw the drama in question, nor is there any reason to seek so far for his knowledge of a superstitious idea common to literature.

[1] Unsigned.

[2] Signed "P."

venient aid to the department of criticism, which had hitherto been very feebly conducted, although he had found opportunity to reproach Longfellow for using so crudely, in "Hyperion," material capable of being highly wrought by art, and had praised Fouqué's "Undine" with delightful appreciation. In the January issue Moore's "Aleiphron" drew from him one of those partial reviews that seem to invalidate the usefulness of any criticism of contemporaries, and in piecing it out he availed himself of his former remarks on Drake and Marvell in the "Messenger," but openly under the form of self-quotation. In a mediocre notice of Bryant, somewhat later, he again had recourse to the old files, and in other insignificant criticisms he is found airing the bastard Hebrew learning of his article in the "New York Review," and even enumerating once more the storehouses of literary odds and ends, including the mythical memoirs of "Suard and André." The most noticeable article is that review of Longfellow's "Voices of the Night," in which he first urged against the New England poet the charge of plagiarism. He instanced in particular Tennyson's "The Death of the Old Year" as the source of "The Midnight Mass for the Dying Year." This he characterized as belonging "to the most barbarous class of literary robbery; that class in which, while the words of the wronged author are avoided, his most intangible, and therefore his least defensible and least

reclaimable property, is purloined."[1] In other ways than such book-reviewing as this Poe's mind was also unprofitably employed. A satirical sketch, "Peter Pendulum, the Business Man," and the first of his articles respecting decoration, "The Philosophy of Furniture," were his only signed contributions, for the mere plate or sporting articles may be neglected.

In each number, however, from January to June appeared an installment of his anonymous work, "The Journal of Julius Rodman, Being an Account of the First Passage across the Rocky Mountains of North America ever achieved by Civilized Man." This narrative is constructed, like that of "Arthur Gordon Pym," so as to win credence by circumstantial detail and an affected air of plainness, and Poe would probably have concluded it similarly with weird marvels of nature. Julius Rodman was the son of an Englishman who had settled in Kentucky. Being left alone by his father's death, he started in his twenty-sixth year professedly on a trapping expedition up the Missouri River, and pushing on for more adventure crossed the Rocky Mountains in northern regions in 1792, but on returning to Virginia, after three years' absence, never conversed respecting his journey, and took great pains to secrete his diary. Unfortunately, although the characters of the exploring party are much more carefully selected than was the case in

[1] *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, vi. 102–103 (February, 1840).

scription of the trip, in which he followed very closely the obvious authorities, such as Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Lewis and Clarke, Pike, and Irving, is enlivened only by an attack on the Sioux, the sight of a beaver dam, and a hand-to-hand conflict with a bear. As before, too, he was led to his subject by the public interest which was now especially directed to the exploration of the West. The work as a whole bears no relation to his genius, except in a single passage which contains a faint suggestion of the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass in "Eleonora."

With the June installment of the "Journal" Poe's contributions to the magazine ceased, and at the same time his engagement with Burton abruptly terminated. There was evidently a serious quarrel between the two editors, but the exact truth regarding it can only be inferred. Poe asserted that Burton had acted dishonorably in advertising prizes for contributions which he never intended to pay, and that this was the ground of his own resignation; Burton, on his side, circulated scandalous reports in regard to Poe's habits and actions, and described these as the cause of the trouble. It will be best to confine attention to the documentary evidence, an important part of which is contained in Poe's letters to Dr. J. E. Snodgrass, of Baltimore, who had been Brooks's associate on the "Museum,"



and was afterwards known as an early abolitionist in that city. This correspondence, which began in 1839 with a request from Poe that his friend would see that a puff of himself in a St. Louis paper was reprinted and the last numbers of "Burton's" noticed by the Baltimore press, extends over three years, and relates mainly to the minor literary affairs of the two, but incidentally some light is thrown on more important matters, and among them on this disagreement between Poe and Burton. In reply to a question regarding the prizes offered by Burton, Poe writes, December 19, 1839, as follows: —

"Touching the Premiums. The Advertisement respecting them was written by Mr. Burton, and is not I think as explicit as might [be]. I can give you no information about their desig[nation furth]er than is shown in the advertisement itself. The tr[uth is,] I object, *in toto*, to the whole scheme — but merely follow[od in] Mr. B.'s wake upon such matters of business." [1]

Dr. Snodgrass sent on a contribution, but had difficulty in recovering possession of it. Just after the quarrel, Poe wrote to him again, in answer to what seems to have been a pressing letter, as follows: —

[1] Poe to Snodgrass, December 19, 1839. This, and all subsequent quotations from the Snodgrass correspondence (partly published in the New York *Herald* March 27, 1881) not otherwise credited, is from a very careful MS. copy of the originals, made some years since by Dr. William Hand Browne of Baltimore, who annotates on this passage, "MS. burnt and broken. Restorations in brackets."

was then at the top of a pile of other MSS. sent for premiums, in a drawer of the office desk. The last day I was in the office I saw the Essay in the same position, and am perfectly sure it is there still. You know it is a peculiar looking MS. and I could not mistake it. In saying it was not in his possession his sole design was to vex you, and through you myself. Were I in your place I would take some summary method of dealing with the scoundrel, whose infamous line of conduct in regard to this whole Premium scheme merits, and shall receive exposure. I am firmly convinced that it was never his intention to pay one dollar of the money offered; and indeed his plain intimations to that effect, made to me personally and directly, were the immediate reason of my cutting the connexion so abruptly as I did. If you could, in any way, spare the time to come on to Philadelphia, I think I could put you in the way of detecting this villain in his rascality. I would go down with you to the office, open the drawer in his presence, and take the MS. from beneath his very nose. I think this would be a good deed done, and would act as a caution to such literary swindlers in future. What think you of this plan? Will you come on? Write immediately — in reply."[1]

In support of Burton's charge of Poe's habits of drinking at this time, nothing has been brought forward except an undated letter from himself to Poe: —

[1] Poe to Snodgrass, June 17, 1840. MS. copy.



"I am sorry you have thought it necessary to send me such a letter. Your troubles have given a morbid tone to your feelings which it is your duty to discourage. I myself have been as severely handled by the world as you can possibly have been, but my sufferings have not tinged my mind with melancholy, nor jaundiced my views of society. You must rouse your energies, and if care assail you, conquer it. I will gladly overlook the past. I hope you will as easily fulfill your pledges for the future. We shall agree very well, though I cannot permit the magazine to be made a vehicle for that sort of severity which you think 'so successful with the mob.' I am truly much less anxious about making a monthly 'sensation' than I am upon the point of fairness. You must, my dear sir, get rid of your avowed ill-feelings toward your brother authors. You see I speak plainly; I cannot do otherwise upon such a subject. You say the people love havoc. I think they love justice. I think you yourself would not have written the article on Dawes, in a more healthy state of mind. I am not trammelled by any vulgar consideration of expediency; I would rather lose money than by such undue severity wound the feelings of a kind-hearted and honorable man. And I am satisfied that Dawes has something of the true fire in him. I regretted your word-catching spirit. But I wander from my design. I accept your proposition to recommence your interrupted avocations upon the *Maga*. Let us meet as if we had not exchanged letters. Use more exercise, write when feelings prompt, and be assured of my friendship. You will soon regain a healthy activity of mind, and laugh at your past vagaries."[1]

[1] Griswold, xxxii.

There is in this letter no statement nor even any implication that the cause of Poe's temporary resignation, of which we know only from this source, was drunkenness. All that is said would be more obviously and naturally explained, both in substance and tone, on the supposition that when Burton refused to print the censorious criticism on Rufus Dawes Poe gave way to his anger, perhaps used high words, and in a moment of pique left his situation; on returning to himself, and under the strong pressure of poverty at home, it is not unlikely that he surprised Burton by one of his self-humiliating and bitter letters, and that Burton wrote to him the foregoing kindly reply. This supposition explains everything that is said, whereas the assumption that Poe had been on a drunken spree is not required by any phrase or sentence, and would fail to explain why the entire letter deals with the subject of Poe's criticism and the temperament out of which it sprang.

Independently of this letter, however, it is plain that Burton did charge Poe with the vicious habit which he would find most difficulty in denying. Dr. Snodgrass heard the story at second hand, and nearly nine months later wrote about it to Poe, who was then editor of "Graham's." The reply is at length and explicit: —

PHILADELPHIA, *April* 1, 1841.

MY DEAR SNODGRASS: — I fear you have been thinking it was not my design to answer your kind letter at

all. It is now April Fool's Day, and yours is dated March 8th; but believe me, although, for good reason, I may occasionally postpone my reply to your favors, I am never in danger of forgetting them.

. . . . . .

In regard to Burton. I feel indebted to you for the kind interest you express; but scarcely know how to reply. My situation is embarrassing. It is impossible, as you say, to notice a buffoon and a felon, as one gentleman would notice another. The law, then, is my only resource. Now, if the truth of a scandal could be admitted in justification — I mean of what the law terms a *scandal* — I would have matters all my own way. I would institute a suit, forthwith, for his personal defamation of myself. He would be unable to prove the truth of his allegations. I could prove their falsity and their malicious intent by witnesses who, seeing me at all hours of every day, would have the best right to speak — I mean Burton's own clerk, Morrell, and the compositors of the printing office. In fact, I could prove the scandal almost by acclamation. I should obtain damages. But, on the other hand, I have never been scrupulous in regard to what I have said of him. I have always told *him* to his face, and everybody else, that I looked upon him as a blackguard and a villain. This is notorious. He would meet me with a cross action. The truth of the allegation — which I could [as] easily prove as he would find it difficult to prove the truth of his own respecting me — would not avail me. The law will not admit, as justification of my calling Billy Burton a scoundrel, that Billy Burton is really such. What then can I do? If I sue, he sues: you see how it is.

At the same time — as I may, after further reflection, be induced to sue, I would take it as an act of kindness — not to say *justice* — on your part, if you would see the gentleman of whom you spoke, and ascertain with accuracy all that may legally avail me; that is to say, what and when were the words used, and whether your friend would be willing for your sake, for my sake, and for the sake of truth, to give evidence if called upon. Will you do this for me?

So far for the matter inasmuch as it concerns Burton. I have now to thank you for your defence of myself, as stated. You are a physician, and I presume no physician can have difficulty in detecting the *drunkard* at a glance. You are, moreover, a literary man, well read in morals. You will never be brought to believe that I could write what I daily write, *as* I write it, were I as this villain would induce those who know me not, to believe. In fine, I pledge you, before God, the solemn word of a gentleman, that I am temperate even to rigor. From the hour in which I first saw this basest of calumniators to the hour in which I retired from his office in uncontrollable disgust at his chicanery, arrogance, ignorance and brutality, *nothing stronger than water ever passed my lips.*

It is, however, due to candor that I inform you upon what foundation he has erected his slanders. At no period of my life was I ever what men call intemperate. I never was in the *habit* of intoxication. I never drank drams, &c. But, for a brief period, while I resided in Richmond, and edited the *Messenger* I certainly did give way, at long intervals, to the temptation held out on all sides by the spirit of Southern conviviality. My sensitive temperament could not stand an excitement

which was an every day matter to my companions. In short, it sometimes happened that I was completely intoxicated. For some days after each excess I was invariably confined to bed. But it is now quite four years since I have abandoned every kind of alcoholic drink — four years, with the exception of a single deviation, which occurred shortly *after* my leaving Burton, and when I was induced to resort to the occasional use of *cider*, with the hope of relieving a nervous attack.

You will thus see, frankly stated, the whole amount of my sin. You will also see the blackness of that heart which could *revive* a slander of this nature. Neither can you fail to perceive how desperate the malignity of the slanderer must be — how resolute he must be to slander, and how slight the grounds upon which he would build up a defamation — since he can find nothing better with which to charge me than an accusation which can be disproved by each and every man with whom I am in the habit of daily intercourse.

I have now only to repeat to you, in general, my solemn assurance that my habits are as far removed from intemperance as the day from the night. My sole drink is water.

Will you do me the kindness to repeat this assurance to such of your own friends as happen to speak of me in your hearing?

I feel that nothing more is requisite, and you will agree with me upon reflection.

Hoping soon to hear from you, I am,

Yours most cordially,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

DR. J. E. SNODGRASS.

[1] Poe to Snodgrass, *Baltimore American*, April, 1881.

Unfortunately, this disclaimer is traversed by a letter from Mr. C. W. Alexander, the publisher of the magazine, to Mr. T. C. Clarke, of Philadelphia. In answer to the question whether Poe's alleged irregularities at that time were such as to interfere with his work, Mr. Alexander writes: —

"The absence of the principal editor on professional duties left the matter frequently in the hands of Mr. Poe, whose unfortunate failing may have occasioned some disappointment in the preparation of a particular article expected from *him*, but never interfering with the regular publication of the "Gentleman's Magazine," as its monthly issue was never interrupted upon any occasion, either from Mr. Poe's deficiency, or from any other cause, during my publication of it, embracing the whole time of Mr. Poe's connection with it. That Mr. Poe had faults seriously detrimental to his own interests, none, of course, will deny. They were, unfortunately, too well known in the literary circles of Philadelphia, were there any disposition to conceal them. But he alone was the sufferer, and not those who received the benefit of his preëminent talents, however irregular his habits or uncertain his contributions may occasionally have been." [1]

It is possible that Mr. Alexander, writing ten years after the event, may have confused his recollections and antedated the intemperance of Poe, which became frequent and notorious during the next year. Were it not for this letter there would

[1] Alexander to Clarke, October 20, 1850, Gill, p. 97.

be no direct evidence that Poe was not, as he claimed to be, a sober man from the time he left Richmond to that of his wife's illness in 1841, and this would agree with Gowan's account of him in New York and with Mrs. Clemm's statement, reported by Mr. R. E. Shapley, of Philadelphia, — "For years I know he did not taste even a glass of wine." To no other period of his mature life are these words applicable. It should be noted, too, that Wilmer, who sometimes met him in Philadelphia, says that during their acquaintance he "did not see him inebriated; no, not in a single instance;"[1] but in his "Recollections" he asserts unqualifiedly that this fault was the cause of all of Poe's differences with his employers. Probably the true cause of the trouble was less Poe's habits than his acts; it was of a business nature, and in the affair each party seems to have had matter for complaint. Burton, who it will be remembered was a comic actor, had got into quarrels with the managers, and he determined to have a theatre of his own; to obtain this he needed funds, and by way of raising them he advertised his magazine for sale without mentioning his intention to Poe. The latter, on his part, arranged to issue a prospectus of a new and rival monthly, "The Penn Magazine," without advising Burton. He had long had a strong ambition to have a magazine of his own. In fact, he was always waiting to find some

[1] *Our Press Gang*, p. 284.

one with capital to embark in the enterprise, and while still on Burton's was constantly uneasy through the indulgence of this hope. In a letter to Snodgrass, written six months before, there occurs a characteristic passage: —

"I have heard, indirectly, that an attempt is to be made by some one of capital in Baltimore, to get up a Magazine. Have you heard anything of it? If you have, will you be kind enough to let me know all about it by *return of mail* — if you can spend the time to oblige me — I am particularly desirous of understanding how the matter stands — who are the parties, &c." [1]

He was now preparing his prospectus, and no doubt hoped that Burton's going out of the trade would help his own prospects. He might fairly expect that in the changes about to take place some of the subscribers to the "Gentleman's" would remain with him, who, as its real editor, had won position and respect, especially with the press of the city, and that they would form a nucleus for the circulation of the "Penn." Whether in fact he did, as was charged by Griswold, obtain transcripts of Burton's subscription-list and other valuable papers, for his own use, remains in doubt. It was an obvious thing for him to do; he was out of humor with Burton, and as he believed that the latter would soon sell he may not have regarded it as a dishonorable proceeding. Undoubtedly Burton looked on Poe's action in advertising his new

[1] Poe to Snodgrass, January 21, 1840. MS. copy.

enterprise at that moment as likely to diminish the selling value of his property; if in addition Poe attempted to secure his subscribers in an underhand way, he would have had cause to be offended, and if he remonstrated *Poe may have told him* that he "looked upon him as a blackguard and a villain," in the phrases of his letter to Snodgrass. That there is no explicit mention of the charge in the following letter, in which Poe makes his explanation to his employer, counts for nothing in view of the points that mark omissions; but the letter, as edited, proves with sufficient certainty that the "Penn Magazine" was the apple of discord, and it has, besides, interesting bearings as an indication of Poe's daily habits of business, his demeanor and temper.

SIR: — I find myself at leisure this Monday morning, June 1, to notice your very singular letter of Saturday. . . . I have followed the example of Victorino and slept upon the matter, and you shall now hear what I have to say. In the first place, your attempts to bully me excite in my mind scarcely any other sentiment than mirth. When you address me again, preserve, if you can, the dignity of a gentleman. . . . I shall feel myself more at liberty to be explicit. As for the rest, you *do me gross injustice; and you know it.* As usual, you have wrought yourself into a passion with me on account of some imaginary wrong; for no real injury, or attempt at injury, have you ever received at my hands. As I live, I am utterly unable to say why you are angry, or what true grounds of complaint you have against

specs inflicted by those whom you have looked upon as friends — and these things have rendered you suspicious. You once wrote in your magazine a sharp critique upon a book of mine — a very silly book — Pym. Had I written a similar criticism upon a book of yours, you feel that you would have been my enemy for life, and you therefore imagine in my bosom a latent hostility towards yourself. This has been a mainspring in your whole conduct towards me since our first acquaintance. It has acted to prevent all cordiality. In a general view of human nature your idea is just — but you will find yourself puzzled in judging me by ordinary motives. Your criticism was essentially correct, and therefore, although severe, it did not occasion in me one solitary emotion either of anger or dislike. But even while I write those words, I am sure you will not believe them. Did I not still think you, in spite of the exceeding littleness of some of your horrid actions, a man of many honorable impulses, I should not now take the trouble to send you this letter. I cannot permit myself to suppose that you would say to me in cool blood what you said in your letter of yesterday. You are, of course, only mistaken, in asserting that I owe you a hundred dollars, and you will rectify the mistake at once when you come to look at your accounts.

Soon after I joined you, you made me an offer of money, and I accepted $20. Upon another occasion, at my request, you sent me enclosed in a letter $30. Of this 30, I repaid 20 within the next fortnight (drawing no salary for that period). I was thus still in your debt

$30, when not long ago I again asked a loan of $30, which you promptly handed to me at your own home. Within the last three weeks, three dollars each week have been retained from my salary, an indignity which I have felt deeply but did not resent. You state the sum retained as $8, but this I believe is through a mistake of Mr. Morrell. My postage bill, at a guess, might be $9 or $10 — and I *therefore am indebted to you*, upon the whole, in the amount of about $60. More than this sum I shall not pay. You state that you can no longer afford to pay $50 per month for 2 or 3 pp. of MS. Your error here can be shown by reference to the Magazine. During my year with you I have written —

In July	5 pp	
" August	9 "	
" Sept.	16 "	
" Oct.	4 "	
" Nov.	5 "	
" Dec.	12 "	
" Jan.	9 "	
" Feb.	12 "	
" March	11 "	
" April	17 "	
" May	14 "	+ 5 copied — Miss McMichael's MS.
" June	9 "	+ 3 " Chandlers.
	132	[*sic*]

Dividing this sum by 12, we have an average of 11 pp. per month — not 2 or 3. And this estimate leaves out of question everything in the way of extract or compilation. Nothing is counted but *bonâ fide* composition. 11 pp. at $3 per p. would be $33, at the usual Magazine

the *printing office*; reading, alteration and preparation of MSS., with compilation of various articles, such as Plate articles, Field sports, &c. Neither has anything been said of my name upon your title page, a small item — you will say — but still something, as you know. Snowden pays his editresses $2 per week each for their names *solely*. Upon the whole, I am not willing to admit that you have greatly overpaid me. That I did not do four times as much as I did for the Magazine was your own fault. At first I wrote long articles, which you deemed inadmissible, and never did I suggest any to which you had not some immediate and decided objection. Of course I grew discouraged, and could feel no interest in the journal.

I am at a loss to know why you call me selfish. If you mean that I borrowed money of you — you know that you offered it, and you know that I am poor. In what instance has any one ever found me selfish? Was there selfishness in the affront I offered Benjamin (whom I respect, and who spoke well of me) because I deemed it a duty not to receive from any one commendation at your expense? . . . I have said that I could not tell why you were angry. Place yourself in my situation and see whether you would not have acted as I have done. You first "enforced," as you say, a deduction of salary: giving me to understand thereby that you thought of parting company. You next spoke disrespectfully of me behind my back — this as an habitual thing — to those whom you supposed your friends, and who pune-

tually retailed me, as a matter of course, every ill-natured word which you uttered. Lastly, you advertised your magazine for sale without saying a word to me about it. I felt no anger at what you did — none in the world. Had I not firmly believed it your design to give up your journal, with a view of attending to the Theatre, I should never have dreamed of attempting one of my own. The opportunity of doing something for myself seemed a good one — (and I was about to be thrown out of business) — and I embraced it. Now I ask you, as a man of honor and as a man of sense — what is there wrong in all this? What have I done at which you have any right to take offence? I can give you no definitive answer (respecting the continuation of Rodman's Journal) until I hear from you again. The charge of $100 I shall not admit for an instant. If you persist in it our intercourse is at an end, and we can each adopt our own measures.

In the meantime, I am,

Yr. Obt. St.,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

WM. E. BURTON, ESQ.

This letter seems meant to be conciliatory, but if the savageness of Poe's characterization of his old chief, already given, is any sign, it failed of its purpose. Burton suppressed six or seven criticisms still on hand, and wrote and spoke hard words about his former associate. Nor did Poe lag much behind in returning ill-will. Six months later he wrote to Snodgrass: —

[1] Poe to Burton, Ingram, i. 175-179.

The press here in a body, have given him the cut direct. So be it — suum cuique. We have said quite enough about this genius." [1]

On the whole, the natural inference from all these papers is that the two editors quarreled over some incident connected with the "Penn Magazine," and afterwards, being angry, told their friends all the grievances they had against each other, as their justification.

Burton's road, wherever it lay, did not again cross Poe's. Within two weeks after the rupture, "The Penn Magazine" was publicly [2] announced to appear January 1, 1841, and prospectuses were sent to the press and to private friends. Previous to his quarrel with Burton, Poe contributed to "Alexander's Weekly Messenger," published by the same firm as the "Gentleman's," a series of articles on cryptography, in which he challenged his readers to invent ciphers which he could not interpret. According to his own statement, out of the hundred sent in he read all but one, and that he proved to be an imposture. He probably now wrote further for the same, and possibly for other papers, as he had done on first coming to Philadelphia, and perhaps it was now that he contrib-

[1] Poe to Snodgrass, January 17, 1841. MS. copy.
[2] *Philadelphia Saturday Chronicle*, June 13, 1840.



uted to the "United States Military Magazine,"[1] in which at one time he had articles of considerable length; but no work of his has been traced until the December "Gentleman's," in which he published one of the most striking of the tales of conscience, "The Man of the Crowd." With this number the magazine passed under the control of George R. Graham, editor of a feeble monthly, the "Casket," who had bought out Burton in October, and now merged the two under the name, soon to become famous, of "Graham's Magazine." He was also one of the proprietors of "The Saturday Evening Post," a weekly, in which Poe had been praised with increasing warmth and frequency for the past year. By such means, apparently, Poe and Graham came to a better acquaintance in the fall of 1840. As the winter came on Poe was attacked by an illness of undefined character, but presumably similar to those which continued to occur with increasing frequency until his death. In consequence of this the issue of the "Penn," which was to have taken place January 1, was postponed until March 1. The state of his affairs, as they seemed to himself on recovering his health, is displayed in his correspondence with Snodgrass. He writes, January 17: —

[1] P. S. Duval to the author, August 4, 1884. This magazine was printed in Duval's lithographing establishment, in which Wilmer, in his *Recollections*, says Poe at one time, despairing of literature as a means of support, undertook to learn lithography. Mr. Duval writes that there is no truth whatever in this statement.

"You write to know my prospects with the 'Penn.' They are *glorious*, notwithstanding the world of difficulties under which I labored and labor. My illness (from which I have now entirely recovered), has been, for various reasons, a benefit to my scheme rather than a disadvantage; *and*, upon the whole, if I do not eminently succeed in this enterprise the fault will be altogether mine own. Still, I am using every exertion to insure success, and, among other manœuvres, I have cut down the bridges behind me. I must now do or die — I mean in a literary sense.

. . . . . .

"In the literary way I shall endeavor, gradually, (if I cannot effect the purpose at once) to give the Magazine a reputation for the having *no articles but from* the best pens — a somewhat negative merit, you will say. In criticism I will be bold and sternly, absolutely just, with friend and foe. From this purpose nothing shall turn me. I shall aim at *originality* in the body of the work, more than at any other especial quality. I have one or two articles of my own in statu pupillari that would make you stare, at least, on account of the utter oddity of their conception. To carry out the conception is a difficulty which — may be overcome."

That the lack of capital was still a principal obstacle, however, appears from the conclusion of the letter: —

"And now, my dear Snodgrass, will you do me a favor? I have heard some mention of a new magazine to be started in Baltimore by a Virginian & a practical printer. I am *anxious* to know all the details of the

project. Can you procure and send me (by return of mail) a Prospectus? If you cannot get one, will you write me all about it — the gentleman's name, &c., &c., &c.?

"I have underscored the word 'anxious' because I really mean what I say, and because, about a fortnight ago, I made to the Hon. N. C. Brooks, A. M. a request just such as I now make to yourself. *He did not reply;* and I, expecting of course the treatment which one gentleman naturally expects from another, have been put to the greatest inconvenience by the daily but fruitless expectation."[1]

On the back of this letter was printed the prospectus of "The Penn Magazine," which forms the basis of Poe's many subsequent notices of a similar kind, and explains the aims and purposes that he continued to cherish as peculiarly his own. It read as follows: —

PROSPECTUS

OF

THE PENN MAGAZINE,

A MONTHLY LITERARY JOURNAL,

To be edited and published in the city of Philadelphia,

By EDGAR A. POE.

TO THE PUBLIC. — Since resigning the conduct of the Southern Literary Messenger, at the commencement of its third year, I have always had in view the establishment of a Magazine which should retain some of the chief features of that journal, abandoning or greatly modifying the rest. Delay, however, has been occasioned by a variety of causes, and not until now have I

[1] Poe to Snodgrass. MS. copy.

Messenger. Having in it no proprietary right, my objects too being at variance in many respects with those of its very worthy owner, I found difficulty in stamping upon its pages that *individuality* which I believe essential to the full success of all similar publications. In regard to their permanent influence, it appears to me that a continuous definite character, and a marked certainty of purpose, are requisites of vital importance; and I cannot help believing that these requisites are only attainable when one mind alone has the general direction of the undertaking. Experience has rendered obvious — what might indeed have been demonstrated *a priori* — that in founding a Magazine of my own lies my sole chance of carrying out to completion whatever peculiar intentions I may have entertained.

To those who remember the early days of the Southern periodical in question, it will be scarcely necessary to say that its main feature was a somewhat overdone causticity in its department of Critical Notices of new books. The Penn Magazine will retain this trait of severity insomuch only as the calmest yet sternest sense of justice will permit. Some years since elapsed may have mellowed down the petulance without interfering with the sight (?) of the critic. Most surely they have not yet taught him to read through the medium of a publisher's will, nor convinced him that the interests of letters are mullied with the interests of truth. It shall be the first and chief purpose of the Magazine now proposed to become known as one where may be found at all times, and upon all sub-

jects, an honest and a fearless opinion. It shall be a leading object to assert in precept, and to maintain in practice, the rights, while in effect it demonstrates the advantages, of an absolutely independent criticism; — a criticism self-sustained; guiding itself only by the purest rules of Art; analyzing and urging these rules as it applies them; *holding* itself *aloof* from all *personal* bias; acknowledging no fear save that of outraging the right; yielding no point either to the vanity of the author, or to the assumptions of antique prejudice, or to the involute and anonymous cant of the Quarterlies, or to the arrogance of those organized *cliques* which, hanging on like nightmares upon American literature, manufacture, at the nod of our principal book-sellers, a pseudo-public-opinion by wholesale. These are objects of which no man need be ashamed. They are purposes, moreover, whose novelty at least will give them interest. For assurance that I will fulfill them in the best spirit and to the very letter, I appeal with confidence to those friends, and especially to those Southern friends, who sustained me in the Messenger, where I had but a very partial opportunity of completing my own plans.

In respect to the other characteristics of the Penn Magazine a few words here will suffice.

It will endeavor to support the general interests of the republic of letters, without reference to particular regions — regarding the world at large as the true audience of the author. Beyond the precincts of literature, properly so called, it will leave in better hands the task of instruction upon all matters of *very* grave moment. Its aim chiefly shall be *to please* — and this through means of versatility, originality, and pungency. It may be as

vigorous of the European prints. In all branches of the literary department, the best aid, from the highest and purest sources, is secured.

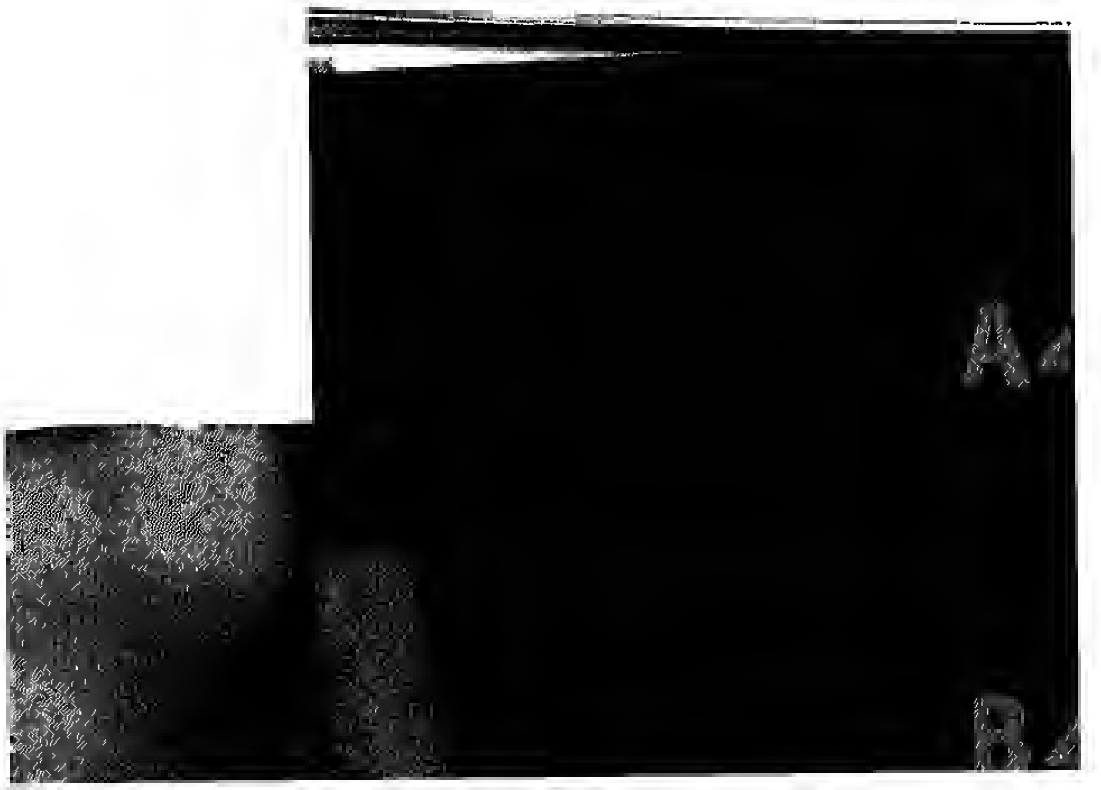
To the mechanical execution of the work the greatest attention will be given which such a matter can require. In this respect it is proposed to surpass, by very much, the ordinary Magazine style. The form will somewhat resemble that of The Knickerbocker; the paper will be equal to that of The North American Review; pictorial embellishments are promised only in the necessary illustration of the text.

The Penn Magazine will be published in Philadelphia, on the first of each month: and will form, half-yearly, a volume of about 500 pages. The price will be $5 per annum, payable in advance, or upon the receipt of the first number, which will be issued on the first of March, 1841. Letters addressed to the Editor and Proprietor,

EDGAR A. POE.

PHILADELPHIA, *January* 1, 1841.

These purposes and the sanguine hopes of Poe were balked by the coincidence of a good offer from Graham and a financial depression through the country. The "Saturday Evening Post," February 20, 1841, announced that the scheme of the "Penn Magazine" had been suspended, owing to the disturbance in monetary affairs, in which periodicals were always the first to suffer; it was added



that its editor had the finest prospects of success, the press, and particularly the South and West, being warm in his cause, and an excellent list of subscribers having been already secured; this "stern, just, and competent critic," it concluded, would now take the editorial chair of "Graham's."

Poe's hand may be clearly seen in the critical department of "Graham's" as early as February, but his responsibility as editor in charge did not begin until the April issue. From that time until June of the next year he contributed to every number, much of what he wrote being of his best work. This period of his authorship is especially distinguished by a remarkable quickening of his powers of analytical reasoning, by virtue of which he struck out a new vein of fiction. The first notable sign of this mental development is in the articles contributed to "Alexander's Weekly Messenger," about January, 1840, while he was still engaged on Burton's magazine, on the subject of cryptography, to which reference has already been made. In July, 1841, he returned to the subject, in "Graham's," and again received and translated several intricate cryptographs. On the first of May previous, when Graham's weekly, the "Saturday Evening Post," appeared in an enlarged and improved form, he gave distinction to the number by an analogous exercise of his analytical powers, — his successful exposure of the plot of "Barnaby Rudge" from the material afforded by the introductory

chapters. Dickens is said to have been so surprised as to ask Poe if he were the devil. It was in April, however, in the very first number of his editing, that "Graham's" contained his earliest story in which this interest, the employment of method in disentangling a plot by mere ratiocination, is principally involved. It was "The Murders of the Rue Morgue," perhaps the most famous of his tales. It has been objected that really there is no analysis in unraveling a web woven for that purpose; and, in a sense, this is true. Acute as Poe's penetrative powers were, the ratiocinative tales (with the possible exception of "The Mystery of Marie Roget") do not illustrate them. The primary gift employed in these ingenious narratives is constructiveness; they differ from their predecessors, from "The Fall of the House of Usher" for example, not in the intellectual faculties exercised, but in their aim and conduct. In the earlier group Poe gradually worked up to the *dénoûment* of a highly complicated series of facts and emotions; in the later one, stating only the *dénoûment* of a similar series, he gradually worked back to its origins; in both cases he first constructed the story, but in telling it he reversed in one the method used in the other. The main difference is that in the old process the emotional element counts for more, while in the new one the incidents are necessarily the important part; indeed, they almost absorb attention. That the ratiocinative tales are on a

the fact that later writers have far surpassed Poe in the complexity of this sort of mechanism, and therefore in the apparent miracle of the solution. They come short of Poe only in the original invention of the plot; that is to say, they fail by defects of imagination in the selection, and of artistic power in the grouping, of their facts, for it would be a mistake to suppose that the interest in "The Murders of the Rue Morgue" is simply the puzzle of detection.

The other tales that appeared during this period are, in the "Post," the insignificant "A Succession of Sundays" ("Three Sundays in a Week"), and in "Graham's" "The Descent into the Maelström," which is to be classed with the "MS. Found in a Bottle," and is the best of its kind; "The Island of the Fay," the earliest of the simple landscape pieces, and a study, as it proved, for "Eleonora;" an arabesque in his old manner, "The Colloquy of Monos and Una," noticeable as the first open expression of dissatisfaction with modern institutions; the two inferior sketches, "Never Bet the Devil your Head," a satire on tales with a moral, and "Life in Death" ("The Oval Portrait"), a variation of an old theme; and, lastly, the fine color study, "The Masque of the Red Death," in which the plot is managed almost exclusively by merely decorative effects.



In nearly all these tales, and particularly in this last one, the constructive genius of their author is most distinctively exercised; they are thus admirable illustrations of his theory as he developed it in his critical writings of this period, and fully reach the high standard of literary art by which he measured the works of others. Poe preferred the form of the short story to that of the novel, for the same reason that he thought brevity an essential in purely poetic composition, because length is inconsistent with a single effect, or, as he termed it, with the unity or totality of interest. Both his aim and his method in narrative prose are succinctly described in his own words: —

"A skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single *effect* to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents — he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this pre-conceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one preëstablished design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished, because undisturbed; and this is an end unattainable by the novel." [1]

[1] *Works*, ii. 197, 198.

In Poe's best tales it is this ideal absolutely realized that has made them immortal.

Of his old poetry he contributed to the "Post" "The Coliseum" and "The Bridal Ballad," and to "Graham's," "To Helen," "Israfel," and "To One Departed," the last two much revised. The bulk of his writing, however, was critical, and consisted of notices of new books. In the course of the fifteen months he passed in review, at greater or less length, and with various degrees of care, works by Bulwer, Dickens, Macaulay, Marryatt, Lever, and James, and, of American authors, Longfellow and Hawthorne, besides others of only local notoriety, such as Brainard, the Davidson Sisters, Seba Smith, Wilmer, and Cornelius Mathews. There were shorter notices of many others, both at home and abroad, contemporary and classic; and in particular there was a concise view of over a hundred native writers in three papers, entitled "Autography," an expansion of similar articles in the "Messenger" for 1836. Without entering in this place on the question of Poe's powers and influence as a critic (and throughout his life, it must always be kept in mind, he was far more distinguished in America as a critic than as either a romancer or a poet), his attitude toward his contemporaries cannot be even momentarily neglected at any stage of his career.

This attitude had not changed since he was editor of the "Messenger." He still remembered his

review of "Norman Leslie" as inaugurating the new age in American criticism, and Theodore S. Fay continued to be his favorite example of the bepuffed literary imposter. His general view of our literary affairs at this time was expressed in a review of the scurrilous and filthy satire by his friend Wilmer, "The Quacks of Helicon," in which he had incorporated his article written two years before and revamped by the editor of the "Pittsburg Examiner" in that short-lived periodical: —

"We repeat it: — *it is* the truth which he has spoken; and who shall contradict us? He has said unscrupulously what every reasonable man among us has long known to be 'as true as the Pentateuch' — that, as a literary people, we are one vast perambulating humbug. He has asserted that we are *clique*-ridden; and who does not smile at the obvious truism of that assertion? He maintains that chicanery is, with us, a far surer road than talent to distinction in letters. Who gainsays this? The corrupt nature of our ordinary criticism has become notorious. Its powers have been prostrated by its own arm. The intercourse between critic and publisher, as it now almost universally stands, is comprised either in the paying and pocketing of blackmail, as the price of a simple forbearance, or in a direct system of petty and contemptible bribery, properly so-called — a system even more injurious than the former to the true interests of the public, and more degrading to the buyers and sellers of good opinion, on account of the more positive character of the service here rendered for the consideration

received. We laugh at the idea of any denial of our assertions upon this topic; they are infamously true. . . .

"We may even arrive, in time, at that desirable point from which a distinct view of our men of letters may be obtained, and their respective pretensions adjusted, by the standard of rigorous and self-sustaining criticism alone. That their several positions are as yet properly settled; that the posts which a vast number of them now hold are maintained by any better tenure than that of the chicanery upon which we have commented, will be asserted by none but the ignorant, or the parties who have best right to feel an interest in the 'good old condition of things.' No two matters can be more radically different than the reputation of some of our prominent *littérateurs*, as gathered from the mouths of the people, (who glean it from the paragraphs of the papers), and the same reputation as deduced from the private estimate of intelligent and educated men. We do not advance this fact as a new discovery. Its truth, on the contrary, is the subject, and has long been so, of every-day witticism and mirth.

. . . "Is there any man of good feeling and of ordinary understanding — is there one single individual among all our readers — who does not feel a thrill of bitter indignation, apart from any sentiment of mirth, as he calls to mind instance after instance of the purest, of the most unadulterated quackery in letters, which has risen to a high post in the apparent popular estimation, and which still maintains it, by the sole means of a blustering arrogance, or of a busy wriggling conceit, or of the most bare-faced plagiarism, or even through the simple immensity of its assumptions — as-

sumptions not only unopposed by the press at large, but absolutely supported in proportion to the vociferous clamor with which they are made — in exact accordance with their utter baselessness and untenability? We should have no trouble in pointing out, to-day, some twenty or thirty so-called literary personages, who, if not idiots, as we half think them, or if not hardened to all sense of shame by a long course of disingenuousness, will now blush, in the perusal of these words, through consciousness of the shadowy nature of that purchased pedestal on which they stand — will now tremble in thinking of the feebleness of the breath which will be adequate to the blowing it from beneath their feet. With the help of a hearty good will, even *we* may yet tumble them down." [1]

From this general condemnation Poe excepted an editor or two, and he reminded Wilmer, in deprecating indiscriminate abuse, that there were a few poets among us: —

"Mr. Bryant is not *all* a fool. Mr. Willis is not *quite* an ass. Mr. Longfellow *will* steal, but, perhaps, he cannot help it (for we have heard of such things,) and then it must not be denied that *nil tetigit quod non ornavit*." [2]

In his own glance at the literary republic, in the "Autography," he had dispensed praise very freely, nine tenths of the verdicts being favorable and many flattering. The principal exceptions were among the New England writers, especially these whom

[1] *Works*, iv. 542-547. [2] Ibid. iv. 549.

he believed to belong to the clique of the "North American Review;" Emerson, in particular, as being, moreover, a transcendentalist, he treated contemptuously, and Longfellow, whom he generously declares "entitled to the first place among the poets of America," but adds, on jealous reflection, "certainly to the first place among those who have put themselves prominently forth as poets," he strikes at with the old cut, as being guilty of the sin of imitation, — "an imitation sometimes verging upon down-right theft."[1]

In more detailed criticisms of current books, Poe, as was to be expected, merely made specifications of his general strictures regarding the low character of our literature. Whether he dealt with poetry or prose, with the dunces or the geniuses, his estimate, after he had first asked the absorbing question, "Was the writer a literary thief?" was that of a craftsman, and had almost exclusive reference to the workmanship. It consisted, as he would have said, in the application of principles of composition, in minute detail, instead of in the enunciation of them. Consequently, the criticism is, as a rule, so bound up with the work to which it relates as to have no value by itself, and has now no vitality. He spoke the truth in describing his reviews as neither wholly laudatory nor wholly defamatory even in the most exasperating cases of stupidity. To the reader it will not infrequently

[1] *Works*, ii. xviii.

seem that he used a giant's force to crush a fly, or in too many passages was guilty of the worst taste, or even now and then became scurrilous, blustering, and vituperative, or, especially when he attempted humor, very flat. The traits of his style were always *the same*, whether he was *pricking* a reputation or confining himself to mere criticism; he attended to one, or another, or all, of certain points, the chief being originality in idea, handling, construction, keeping, rhetorical and grammatical rules; and he exemplified by citation whatever defects or merits he found. Very seldom he felt able to give unstinted praise, as to Hawthorne, whose tales he said belonged "to the highest region of Art — an Art subservient to genius of a very lofty order," and whose mind he declared "original in *all* points;"[1] but even this notice, in which his insight and his justice are both conspicuous, he could not forbear to blot with the suggested charge that in "Howe's Masquerade" the New Englander had stolen directly from some passages in his own "William Wilson."

In none of these articles does Poe develop any principles except in that on Longfellow's "Ballads and other Poems." He barely touched the old offense of plagiarism, but made his attack in a new quarter by attempting to show that Longfellow's "conception of the *aims* of poesy *is all wrong*," for the reason that "didacticism is the prevalent *tone*

[1] *Works*, ii. 199.

of his song." In his proof Poe restated his poetic theory, which had become freed from its metaphysics since five years before, and in the course of his argument he struck out the happy phrase that remained his pet definition of poetry ever after: —

"Its [Poetry's] first element is the thirst for supernal BEAUTY — a beauty which is not afforded the soul by any existing collocation of earth's forms — a beauty which, perhaps, *no possible* combination of these forms would fully produce. Its second element is the attempt to satisfy this thirst by *novel* combinations among those forms of beauty which already exist, — or by novel combinations *of those combinations which our predecessors, toiling in chase of the same phantom, have already set in order.* We thus clearly deduce the *novelty*, the *originality*, the *invention*, the *imagination*, or lastly, the *creation* of BEAUTY (for the terms as here employed are synonymous) as the essence of all Poesy."[1]

With a slight change (which summed up in one word a succeeding paragraph, embodying his view that music was a necessary constituent), this definition of poetry as being "the rhythmical creation of beauty" became the first principle of his poetic criticism, as indeed, however obscurely made out, it had always been. His former doctrine that a poem should have complete unity within itself he reiterated by reprinting unchanged the passage already quoted from the "Messenger" of 1836. In accordance with these canons, Longfellow, whom under all

[1] *Works*, ii. 366.

circumstances Poe ranked at the head of our poets, was judged to fail by making truth either a primary end or one secondary to mere beauty, and to succeed by confining his poems each to one idea.

Whether those piquant criticisms and powerful tales made "Graham's" popular, or whether its success was due to the shrewd business sagacity and generous advertisement of its owners, the magazine had at once a brilliant run. It had opened with a circulation of eight thousand in January, 1841; in July it had risen to seventeen thousand; in December (at which time the names of Mrs. Emma C. Embury and Mrs. Ann S. Stephens were added to those of George R. Graham, C. J. Peterson, and Edgar A. Poe, as editors) it was twenty-five thousand, and in March forty thousand, — in each case according to the public announcement in the magazine itself. Poe was the working editor during this time, and is fairly entitled to a considerable, if not the main, share in the success of the undertaking. At the same time he seems never to have been contented with his position, and especially he continued to cherish the plan of starting the "Penn Magazine." Shortly after assuming the editorship he wrote to Snodgrass, "The 'Penn,' I hope, is only 'scotched, not killed,'" and added that the project would "unquestionably be resumed hereafter;"[1] and a few months later he addressed his

[1] Poe to Snodgrass, April 1, 1841, *Baltimore American*, April, 1881.

old friend, Kennedy, then in Congress, on the same subject, as appears from a letter to Mr. F. W. Thomas, a Baltimore friend, poet and novelist, dated July 4, 1841: "I wrote to Mr. K. about ten days ago on the subject of a magazine, a project of mine in connection with Graham." [1] Poe doubtless referred to the same scheme when he wrote to Snodgrass, on September 19, what, in view of the success of "Graham's," seems a strange passage: —

"It is not impossible that Graham will join me in the 'Penn.' He has money. By the way is it impossible to start a first-class mag. in Baltimore? Is there no publisher or gentleman of moderate capital who would join me in this scheme? — publishing the work in the City of Monuments?" [2]

A more conclusive indication of restless dissatisfaction with his seeming good fortune as editor of the leading American magazine occurs in an earlier letter to Thomas, dated June 26, 1841: —

"I have just heard through Graham, who obtained his information from Ingraham, that you have stepped into an office at Washington, salary $1,000. From the bottom of my heart I wish you joy. You can now lucubrate at your ease, and will infallibly do something worthy yourself.

"For my own part, notwithstanding Graham's unceasing civility and real kindness, I feel more and more dis-

[1] Poe to Thomas, Stoddard, xcv.

[2] Poe to Snodgrass, MS. copy.

gusted with my situation. Would to God I could do as you have done. Do you seriously think that an application on my part to Tyler would have a good result? My claims, to be sure, are few. I am a Virginian — at least I call myself one, for I have resided all my life, until within the last few years, in Richmond. My political principles have always been, as nearly as may be, with the existing administration, and I battled with right good will for Harrison, when opportunity offered. With Mr. Tyler I have some slight personal acquaintance, although it is a matter which he has possibly forgotten. For the rest I am a literary man, and I see a disposition in Government to cherish letters. Have I any chance? I would be greatly indebted to you if you would reply to this as soon as you can, and tell if it would, in your opinion, be worth my while to make an effort; and, if so, put me on the right track. This could not be better done than by detailing to me your own mode of proceeding." [1]

On July 4, Poe followed this up by another more urgent request: —

"I received yours of the 1st, this morning, and have again to thank you for the interest you take in my welfare. I wish to God I could visit Washington, but — the old story, you know — I have no money; not enough to take me there, saying nothing of getting back. It is a hard thing to be poor; but as I am kept so by an honest motive I dare not complain.

"Your suggestion about Mr. Kennedy is well-timed, and here, Thomas, you can do me a true service. Call

[1] Poe to Thomas, Stoddard, xciii.

upon Kennedy — you know him, I believe ; if not, introduce yourself — he is a perfect gentleman, and will give you cordial welcome. Speak to him of my wishes, and urge him to see the Secretary of War in my behalf, or one of the other Secretaries, or President Tyler. I mention in particular the Secretary of War, because I have been to W. Point, and this may stand me in some stead. I would be glad to get almost any appointment, even a $500 one, so that I have something independent of letters for a subsistence. To coin one's brain into silver, at the nod of a master, is, to my thinking, the hardest task in the world. Mr. Kennedy has been, at all times, a true friend to me — he was the first true friend I ever had — I am indebted to him *for life itself.* He will be willing to help me now, but *needs urging*, for he is always head and ears in business." [1]

Besides indulging in these plans Poe now remembered his old publishers, Lea & Blanchard, and entertained the hope that they would undertake a new edition of his "Tales," including the best of those written since 1839. A few weeks after their first publication, he had written to Snodgrass, "I am happy to say that the edition is already very nearly exhausted." [2] On June 17, 1840, he amplified this statement by saying, "Touching my Tales you will scarcely believe me when I tell you that I am ignorant of their fate, and have never spoken to the publishers concerning them since the day of their

[1] Poe to Thomas, Stoddard, xciv., xcv.

[2] Poe to Snodgrass, December 19, 1839. MS. copy.

issue. I have cause to think, however, that the edition was exhausted almost immediately." [1]

Perhaps it was still with this impression that he addressed the following letter: —

MESSRS. LEA & BLANCHARD, —
PHILADELPHIA.

GENTLEMEN: I wish to publish a new collection of my prose Tales with some such title as this: —

'*The Prose Tales of Edgar A. Poe, including "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," the "Descent into the Maelström," and all his later pieces, with a second edition of the "Tales of the Grotesque & Arabesque."*'

The later pieces will be eight in number, making the entire collection thirty-three, which would occupy two *thick* novel volumes.

I am anxious that your firm should continue to be my publishers, and, if you would be willing to bring out the book, I should be glad to accept the terms which you allowed me before, that is, you receive all profits, and allow me twenty copies for distribution to friends.

Will you be kind enough to give me an early reply to this letter, and believe me

Yours, very respectfully,

EDGAR A. POE.[2]

PHILADELPHIA,
Office Graham's Magazine, August 13, '41.

Whatever doubt he had regarding the matter was dissipated by the reply of the firm: —

[1] Poe to Snodgrass, MS. copy.

[2] *The Library of George W. Childs*, described by F. W. Robinson. Philadelphia, 1882: pp. 13, 14.

Aug. 16, 1841.

EDGAR A. POE

We have yrs of 15th inst in which you are kind enough to offer us a "new collection of prose Tales."

In answer we very much regret to say that the state of affairs is such as to give little encouragement to new undertakings. As yet we have not got through the edition of the other work and up to this time it has not returned to us the expense of its publication. We assure you that we regret this on your account as well as on our own — as it would give us great pleasure to promote your views in relation to publication.[1]

[Unsigned.]

But if Poe could not start his own magazine, nor get a public office, nor publish a new volume of "Tales," his lot was to all outward appearance fortunate; his prospects were brilliant, his reputation steadily growing, his associates friendly, and, especially, his home was in a condition of greater comfort than ever before. Whatever practical difficulties it was his lot to encounter, no shadow had crossed the threshold of the little cottage where he lived with his wife and her mother in a close privacy of watchful love and domestic happiness. Mrs. Clemm, a vigorous woman of about fifty years, who is said to have had the face, size, and figure of a man, was the head of the household, received and expended Poe's wages, and kept things in order. The few acquaintances who called on the family sometimes wondered, as did Mayne Reid,

[1] Letter-book of Lea and Blanchard

how this masculine matron should have been the mother of the fragile girl, still under twenty-one, whose feminine beauty and charm was of so delicate an order that she seems nearly as sylph-like as one of Poe's imaginary creations. "She hardly looked more than fourteen," writes Mr. A. B. Harris, who knew her at this time, "fair, soft, and graceful and girlish. Every one who saw her was won by her. Poe was very proud and very fond of her, and used to delight in the round, child-like face and plump little finger [*sic. Q.* figure?], which he contrasted with himself, so thin and half-melancholy looking, and she in turn idolized him. She had a voice of wonderful sweetness, and was an exquisite singer, and in some of their more prosperous days, when they were living in a pretty little rose-covered cottage on the outskirts of Philadelphia, she had her harp and piano."[1] The third member of this strangely-consorted group, Poe himself, was the same reserved, isolated, dreamy man, of high-strung nerves, proud spirit, and fantastic moods, that he had been in youth. With senses excessively acute and a mind easily accessible to motives of dread, if he was not the monomaniac of fear he knew in Roderick Usher, he was always haunted by suggestions of evil to come; nor was he quite free from the vague apprehension that belongs to children's minds. He did not like to go out in the dark, and with such joolarity as he was

[1] *Hearth and Home.* Quoted in Ingram, i. 221.

capable of said that he believed evil demons had power then. In his home alone he found happiness, affection, and a refuge from contact with the world.

One evening when Virginia was singing she ruptured a blood-vessel; her life was despaired of, and although she partially recovered it was only to sink again and again. The sick-bed was now the centre of the secluded home. "She could not bear the slightest exposure," writes Mr. Harris, "and needed the utmost care; and all those conveniences as to apartment and surroundings which are so important in the case of an invalid were almost matters of life and death to her. And yet the room where she lay for weeks, hardly able to breathe, except as she was fanned, was a little place with the ceiling so low over the narrow bed that her head almost touched it. But no one dared to speak, Mr. Poe was so sensitive and irritable; 'quick as steel and flint,' said one who knew him in those days. And he would not allow a word about the danger of her dying; the mention of it drove him wild."[1] Mr. Graham also tells how he saw Poe hovering around the couch with fond fear and tender anxiety, shuddering visibly at her slightest cough; and he continues, "I rode out one summer evening with them, and the remembrance of his watchful eyes, eagerly bent upon the slightest change of hue in that loved face, haunts me yet as the memory of a sad strain."[2]

[1] *Hearth and Home.* Quoted by Ingram, i. 223, 224.

[2] *Works*, i. xcvii.

This was the beginning of the long suspense of years, with their racking alternations of hope and despair, which Poe called his worst misfortune.

But the subtle influence which preserves a poet's heart from the wounds of life touched him, and raised the transitory elements of his common story and transformed them, and made them a part of the world's tradition of love and loss. In "Eleonora," which was published in the "Gift" for 1842, his absorbing sorrow turned thought and affliction to favor and to prettiness. In this alone of all his tales is there any sign of the warmth, the vital sense of human love. The myth — for such it is — is pictorial, like a mediæval legend: the child-lovers are set in one of those preternatural landscapes which his genius built in the void; but on this sequestered Paradise there fell no shadow save that of loveliness entraining in innocent peace, behind thick forests and innumerable flowers, the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass, through which the River of Silence flowed noiselessly, and watered the slender, white-barked trees that loaned toward the light, and mirrored the scented lawns besprinkled with lilies and a thousand bright blossoms. Here love came to the boy and girl, beneath the fantastic trees suddenly bursting into bloom with bright star-shaped flowers, and they wander, like a new Ancassin and Nicolette, along the river that now murmurs musically, and over the ruby-red asphodels that spring up ten by ten in the place

of the fallen white lilies; and the valley is filled with marvelous light and life and joy, as if glory and sweetness were imprisoned within its vaporous limits. Symbolism has seldom been more simple and pure, more imaginative, childlike, and direct, more absolute master of the things of sense for the things of the spirit, than in this unreal scene. Burne Jones might paint it, for it is the very spirit that sang of the Romaunt of the Rose. Rossetti might have sung its sad conclusion; for now the lady died: —

"The star-shaped flowers shrank into the stems of the trees, and appeared no more. The tints of the green carpet faded; and, one by one, the ruby-red asphodels withered away; and there sprang up, in place of them, ten by ten, dark, eye-like violets, that writhed uneasily and were ever encumbered with dew. And Life departed from our paths; for the tall flamingo flaunted no more his scarlet plumage before us, but flew sadly from the vale into the hills, with all the gay glowing birds that had arrived in his company. And the golden and silver fish swam down through the gorge at the lower end of our domain and bedecked the sweet river never again. And the lulling melody that had been softer than the wind harp of Æolus, and more divine than all save the voice of Eleonora, it died little by little away, in murmurs growing lower and lower, until the stream returned, at length, utterly, into the solemnity of its original silence. And then, lastly, the voluminous cloud uprose, and, abandoning the tops of the mountains to the dimness of old, fell back into the regions of Hesper, and took away all

its manifold golden and gorgeous glories from the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass." [1]

Poe's life was full of glaring contrasts, just such as there is between this exquisite foreboding of his widowhood in symbols and the hard reality. To this experience of the fragility of his hold on happiness, and to this first perception of it toward the fall of 1841, he attributed the worst of his failures, the loss of all power to resist the temptation to drink.

At a later time, in answer to the question whether he could hint the "terrible evil" which was the cause of his "irregularities," he wrote: —

"Yes, I can do more than hint. This 'evil' was the greatest which can befall a man. Six years ago, a wife, whom I loved as no man ever loved before, ruptured a blood-vessel in singing. Her life was despaired of. I took leave of her forever, and underwent all the agonies of her death. She recovered partially, and I again hoped. At the end of a year, the vessel broke again. I went through precisely the same scene. . . . Then again — again — and even once again, at varying intervals. Each time I felt all the agonies of her death — and at each accession of the disorder I loved her more dearly and clung to her life with more desperate pertinacity. But I am constitutionally sensitive — nervous in a very unusual degree. I became insane, with long intervals of horrible sanity. During these fits of absolute unconsciousness I drank — God only knows how often or how much. As a matter of course, my enemies

[1] *Works*, iii. 460.

referred the insanity to the drink, rather than the drink to the insanity."[1]

Whether this self-abandonment to temptation was sudden or gradual is not stated; it may be that Poe's troubles merely occasioned an increase in those irregularities which were said to be matter of common fame before this time. A cousin, who was intimate with the family at the time of Virginia's seizure, says that he then frequently refused wine in her presence, and adds the too significant words that at that time his fits of intoxication were due to the excessive use of opium.[2]

In the next spring (1842) he lost the editorship of "Graham's." The only explanation vouchsafed by the proprietor is that one day, on returning from an unusual absence from his duties, Poe found Mr. Rufus Wilmot Griswold in his chair, and at once turned and left the office never to return.[3] This could hardly have been more than an incident in the truth. A man even so impulsive as Poe does not thus surrender through pique his main source of support, especially when he has a sick wife and is poor; nor, on the other hand, would a business man like Graham allow an editor, who had placed his magazine easily at the head of all competitors and made it a paying property, to depart for any such trivial display of temper. Without making

[1] Poe to ——, January 4, 1848. Ingram, i. 215, 216.
[2] Miss A. F. Poe to the author, September 13, 1884.
[3] Gill, pp. 110, 111.

an assertion, it may fairly be inferred that, to use Mr. Kennedy's words in regard to Poe's failure on the "Messenger," his nature was too "eccentric, irregular, and querulous" for him to hold the position; furthermore, as has become clear enough, his heart was not in the work: he had been chafing as restlessly in this position as when on "Burton's," and had continually sought other modes of support. Mr. Graham had engaged Griswold temporarily, and the "Saturday Evening Post," May 14, 1842, now announced that he had become an associate editor of that paper and of "Graham's." In the magazine itself it was stated that his duties, as Poe's successor, would begin with the July number. Unfortunately, Griswold was to inherit Poe's desk once more as a biographer, and therefore some closer notice must be taken of him.

Rufus Wilmot Griswold, when he was thus publicly announced as the new editor of "Graham's" in May, 1842, was a young man of twenty-seven years, who had some time before left the Baptist ministry for the more attractive walks of literature. He had published both sermons and songs, and had served on several newspapers in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia; latterly he had been engaged in compiling his popular volume, "The Poets and Poetry of America," — that *Hic Jacet* of American mediocrities of the first generation. An unsupported statement by Griswold respecting Poe is liable to suspicion, but there is no improbability in

his account of the beginning of the most unfortunate acquaintance of his life. Poe was the editor of "Graham's" when he heard of Griswold's intention to set in order the "American Parnassus;" but he was not widely known as a poet, — in fact, he had practically abandoned poetry in late years. He was, however, fond of his early verses, and he was never known to omit any opportunity of advertising himself. It was natural, therefore, that shortly after the announcement of Griswold's venture he should call on him for the purpose of securing admission among Apollo's candidates, and it is consistent with all that is known of his habits that he should furnish[1] in March, 1841, a selection from his own verses and material for a biography. When, a year later, the unexpected meeting in Graham's office took place, the incident caused no rupture in the friendly relations of the two men. In April Griswold's long-expected volume had been issued, and Poe offered to review it for him. The transaction which then occurred should be given in Poe's words. September 12, 1842, he wrote to his friend, Mr. F. W. Thomas, as follows: —

"Graham has made me a good offer to return. He is not especially pleased with Griswold, nor is any one else,

[1] Poe to Griswold, March 29, 1841. Griswold, xxi. The genuineness of these letters as printed has been doubted, but the author believes that they are unquestionably Poe's compositions, and in all probability exact copies of the originals. The grounds of this opinion involve too many minutiæ to be recounted.

with the exception of the Rev. gentleman himself, who has gotten himself into quite a hornet's nest by his 'Poets and Poetry.' It appears you gave him personal offence by *delay* in replying to his demand for information touching Mrs. Welby, I believe, or somebody else. Hence his omission of you in the body of the book; for he had prepared quite a long article from my MS., and had selected several pages for quotation. He is a pretty fellow to set himself up for an *honest* judge, or even as a capable one. About two months since, we were talking of the book, when I said that I thought of reviewing it in full for the *Democratic Review*, but found my design anticipated by an article from that ass O'Sullivan, and that I knew no other work in which a notice would be readily admissible. Griswold said, in reply: 'You need not trouble yourself about the *publication* of the review, should you decide on writing it, for I will attend to all that. I will get it in some reputable work, and look to it for the usual pay, in the meantime handing you whatever your charge would be.' This, you see, was an ingenious insinuation of *a bribe* to puff his book. I accepted his offer forthwith, and wrote the review, handed it to him, and received from him the compensation; he never daring to look over the MS. in my presence, and taking it for granted that all was right. But that review has not yet appeared, and I am doubtful if it ever will. I wrote it precisely as I would have written under ordinary circumstances, and be sure there was no predominance of praise." [1]

This does not read very consistently with another

[1] Poe to Thomas, Stoddard, xcvii., xcviii.

tioing it in Lowell's "Pioneer."

While these changes were going on, Poe had not relaxed his efforts to obtain an office under government, and in the letter to Thomas, just quoted, he expresses high hopes of success and great gratitude to his friend for his efforts in the matter. At the same time he was considering Graham's offer to return, and a proposal vaguely entertained by Foster, editor of the "Aurora," to start a magazine in New York under Poe's charge. None of these plans came to anything; and, as always when everything else failed, Poe returned to his scheme for starting a magazine of his own. He had at once advertised the "Penn" on leaving "Graham's,"[2] and addressed his friends and acquaintances through a new Prospectus, and besought them to obtain subscriptions, of which he needed five hundred. As before, "The Penn Magazine" was to be original, fearless, and independent, and would in particular open its columns to merit instead of mushroom reputations, and would be distinguished by criticism instead of puffery. To Washington Poe, the

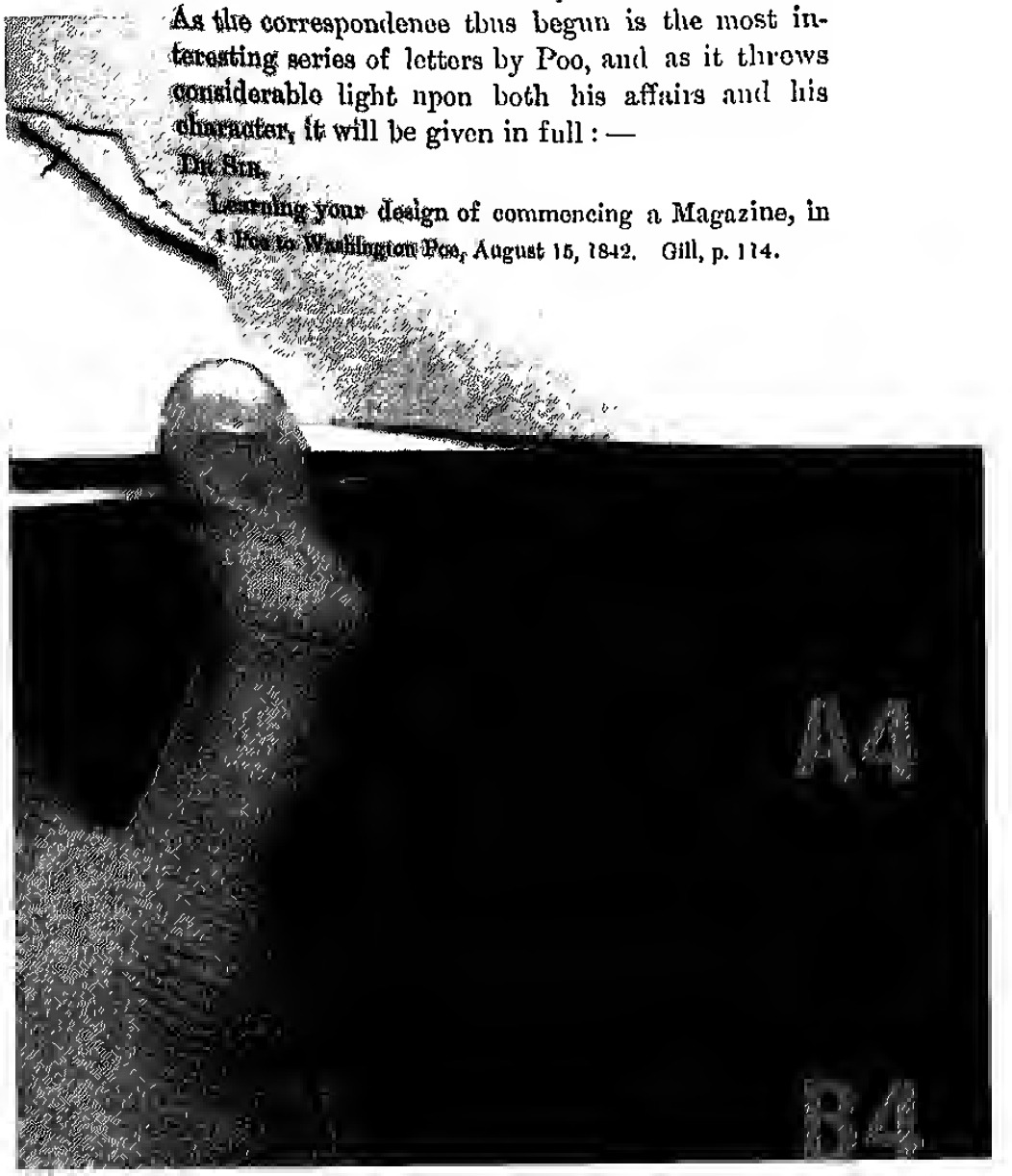
[1] Poe to Griswold. Griswold, xxi. *Cf.* letter *circa* January, 1849, ibid. xxii., in which Poe speaks of the review in the *Pioneer* as having actually appeared in 1843, but it is not to be found there. Possibly Poe contributed it, and the sudden suspension of the *Pioneer* prevented its publication.

[2] *The New York Mirror*, July 30, 1842.



and advance American literature, and that fortune and fame would now come to him hand in hand.[1] He succeeded in interesting Mr. Thomas C. Clarke, the owner of the "Saturday Museum," a weekly paper, in his plan, and the two entered into a partnership for the publication of the new periodical, which it was thought best to call "The Stylus."

The literary work of Poe during the last half of this year was slight. In October he contributed to "Graham's" his long-delayed article on "Rufus Dawes," in which at last he took satirical vengeance on that poetaster. A weaker and less prominent magazine, "Snowden's Lady's Companion," was his principal resource; in it he published in October "The Landscape Garden," and in November, December, and February "The Mystery of Marie Roget," in parts. In this fall, too, he addressed for the first time Mr. J. R. Lowell, who had several times been praised by him incidentally, and who was about to issue a new periodical in Boston. As the correspondence thus begun is the most interesting series of letters by Poe, and as it throws considerable light upon both his affairs and his character, it will be given in full: —



To Sir,

Learning your design of commencing a Magazine, in

[1] Poe to Washington Poe, August 15, 1842. Gill, p. 114.

Boston, upon the first of January next, I take the liberty of asking whether some arrangement might not be made, by which I should become a regular contributor.

I should be glad to furnish a short article each month — of such character as might be suggested by yourself — and upon such terms as you could afford "in the beginning."

That your success will be marked and permanent I will not doubt. At all events, I most sincerely wish you well; for no *man in* America has excited in me so much admiration — and, therefore, none so much of respect and esteem — as the author of "Rosaline."

May I hope to hear from you at your leisure? In the meantime, believe me

Most Cordially Yours,

EDGAR ALLAN POE.[1]

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, ESQRE.
PHILADELPHIA *Novem:* 16, 1842.

The offer was gladly accepted, and articles were sent by Poe, as suggested, for each number. The two following letters continue the story of the acquaintance: —

[not dated — mailed *December* 25, 1842.]

MY DEAR FRIEND

I send you a brief poem for No 2, with my very best wishes.

I duly received yours of the 19th and thank you for reversing the judgment of Mr. Tuckerman — the author of the "Spirit of Poesy," — which, by the way, is somewhat of a misnomer — since no spirit appears.

[1] Poe to Lowell, MS.

Touching the "Miscellany" — had I known of Mr. T.'s accession, I should not have ventured to send an article. Should he, at any time, accept an effusion of mine, I should ask myself what twattle I had been perpetrating, so flat as to come within the scope of his approbation. He writes, through his publishers, — "if Mr. Poe would condescend to furnish more quiet articles he would be a most desirable correspondent." All I have to say is that if Mr. T. Persists in his *quietude*, he will put a quietus on the Magazine of which Mess. Bradbury and Soden have been so stupid as to give him control.

I am all anxiety to see your first number. In the meantime believe me,[1]

[Signature torn off.]

PHILADELPHIA *February* 4, 1843.

MY DEAR MR. LOWELL,

For some weeks I have been daily proposing to write and congratulate you upon the triumphant début of the "Pioneer," but have been prevented by a crowd of more worldly concerns.

Thank you for the compliment in the foot-note. Thank you, also, for your attention in forwarding the Magazine.

As far as a $3 Magazine can please me at all, I am delighted with yours. I am especially gratified with what seems to me a certain coïncidence of opinion and of taste, between yourself and your humble servant, in the minor arrangements, as well as in the more important details of the journal, for example — the poetry

[1] Poe to Lowell, MS.

in the same type as the prose — the designs from Flaxman — &c. As regards the contributors our thoughts are one. Do you know that when, some time since, I dreamed of establishing a Magazine of my own, I said to myself — "If I can but succeed in engaging, as permanent contributors, Mr. Hawthorne, Mr. Neal, and two others, with a certain young poet of Boston, who shall be nameless, I will engage to produce the best journal in America." At the same time, while I thought, and still think highly of Mr. Bryant, Mr. Cooper, and others, I said nothing of *them*.

You have many warm friends in this city — but the reforms you propose require time in their development, and it may be even a year before "The Pioneer" will make due impression among the Quakers. In the meantime, persevere.

I forwarded you, about a fortnight ago I believe, by Hamden's Express, an article called "Notes upon English Verse." A thought has struck me, that it may prove too long, or perhaps too dull, for your Magazine — in either case, use no ceremony, but return it in the same mode (thro' Hamden) and I will, forthwith, send something in its place.

I duly received from Mr. Graham, $10 on your account, for which I am obliged. I would prefer, however, that you would remit directly to myself through the P. Office.

I saw, not long ago, at Graham's, a poem without the author's name — but which for many reasons I take to be yours — the chief being that it was *very* beautiful. Its title I forget but it slightly veiled a lovely Allegory — in which "Religion" was typified, and the whole painted

Truly your friend — E. A. Poe.

Within a few weeks of the date of this letter, the Prospectus of "The Stylus" was first issued through the columns of the "Saturday Museum," which called attention to it in an editorial puff of Poe. The Prospectus is shorter than that of the "Penn Magazine," but the identity of the two is avowed, and in the important parts describing the aims of the editors the same sentences formerly used are incorporated. The "*chief purpose*" is still declared to be to found a journal distinguished by "a *sincere and fearless opinion*," and it is announced as earnest of this intention that "an important feature of the work, and one which will be introduced in the opening number, will be a series of 'Critical and Biographical Sketches of American Writers.'" "The Stylus" was to be illustrated also, like the "Penn," and an agreement, signed January 31, 1843, was entered into between Clarke and Poe on one side and F. O. C. Darley on the other, in accordance with which the latter was to furnish not less than three original designs per month to Clarke and Poe, at seven dollars each, until July 1, 1844, and was not to contribute similar designs for use in any other magazine during that period. The subjects were to be given by the editors, and the first work put into the artist's

[1] Poe to Lowell, MS.



hands for this purpose was "The Gold Bug," for which he made and delivered some designs. Poe himself took the story to Mr. Darley, with whom he held pleasant relations. "He impressed me," writes the latter, "as a refined and very gentlemanly man; exceedingly neat in his person; interesting always, from the intellectual character of his mind, which appeared to me to be tinged with sadness. His manner was quiet and reserved; he rarely smiled. I remember his reading his 'Gold Bug' and 'Black Cat' to me before they were published. The form of his manuscript was peculiar: he wrote on half sheets of note paper, which he pasted together at the ends, making one continuous piece, which he rolled up tightly. As he read he dropped it upon the floor. It was very neatly written, and without corrections, apparently."[1] Several of these small rolls still exist.

In aid of the new venture Poe's life and portrait were printed in the "Saturday Museum," of which it was announced that he was editor. The life was written by a young Philadelphia poet, H. B. Hirst, from materials furnished by T. W. White, of the "Messenger," and Thomas; and the portrait, which was said to be a mere caricature, was lithographed from a miniature.

Poe himself was shortly after sent to Washington to obtain subscriptions among his political friends, and, if possible, those of the President

[1] Darley to the author, February 26, 1884.

and Cabinet through his old acquaintance, Rob Tyler. He apparently also meant to lecture, and to look after his prospects of becoming an office-holder, the particular post in view being an Inspectorship. The visit was unfortunate. On the evening of his arrival he began to drink, and his host's "rummy coffee" following port wine made the beginning of a spree. On the next day, March 11, he so far lost his head as to write a contradictory and untrue letter,[1] plainly the composition of an intoxicated man, to his partner; and a day later, Mr. J. E. Dow, who was taking care of him, also dispatched a letter to Mr. Clarke, advising him to come on and take charge of his friend, as Mr. Thomas was too ill to do so, and he himself too much engaged, while they both felt afraid to send him off to Philadelphia alone, lest he should be led to stop at Baltimore, and there meet with some harm. "Mrs. Poe," says the writer pitifully, "is in a bad state of health, and I charge you, as you have a soul to be saved, to say not one word to her about him until he arrives with you."[2] Poe, however, was sent home by himself, and arrived at Philadelphia March 15, where he was met at the station by Mrs. Clemm. After going home he called on Clarke, who was greatly surprised to see him, but received him "cordially and made light of the matter;" at least, so Poe wrote to his two

[1] Poe to Clarke. Gill, p. 120.
[2] Dow to Clarke. Gill, p. 121.

friends, Thomas and Dow, the next day, in a long epistle,[1] in which, although treating the affair jocosely, and alarmed for its possible effects on Clarke's mind, he expresses his regret and sends his apologies, with many words of gratitude for the attention shown him. He remarks incidentally, "I would be glad, too, if you would take an opportunity of saying to Mr. Reb Tyler that if he *can* look over matters and give me the Inspectorship, I will join the Washingtonians forthwith;" but he seems to have made up his mind that his hopes of office were vain.

That Clarke was not implacably offended by this episode, which Poe accounted for as an attack of illness which had unduly alarmed Dow, appears from the following letter to Lowell, in which the project of the "Stylus" is announced to him. The "Pioneer" had already met its fate, and Lowell was himself ill with ophthalmia.

PHILADELPHIA, *March* 27, 43.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have just received yours of the 24th and am deeply grieved, first that you should have been so unfortunate, and, secondly, that you should have thought it necessary to offer me any apology for your misfortunes. As for the few dollars you owe me — give yourself not one moment's concern about *them*. I am poor, but must be very much poorer, indeed, when I even think of demanding them.

[1] Poe to Thomas and Dow, March 16, 1843. MS. copy.

But I sincerely hope all is not so bad as you suppose it, and that, when you come to look about you, you will be able to continue "The Pioneer." Its decease, just now, would be a most severe blow to the good cause — the cause of a Pure Taste. I have looked upon your Magazine, from its outset, as the best in America, and have lost no opportunity of expressing the opinion. Herewith I send a paper, "The Phil. Sat. Museum," in which I have said a few words on the topic.

I am *not* editing this paper, although an announcement was prematurely made to that effect; but have the privilege of inserting what I please editorially. On the first of July next I hope to issue the first number of "The Stylus," a new monthly, with some novel features. I send you, also, a paper containing the Prospectus. In a few weeks I hope to forward you a specimen sheet. I am anxious to get a poem from yourself for the opening number, but, until you recover your health, I fear that I should be wrong in making the request.

Believe me, my dear friend, that I sympathize with you *truly* in your affliction. When I heard that you had returned to Boston, I hoped you were entirely well, and your letter disappoints and grieves me.

When you find yourself in condition to write, I would be indebted to you if you could put me in the way of procuring a brief article (also for my opening number) from Mr. Hawthorne — whom I believe you know personally. Whatever you gave him, we should be happy to give. A part of my design is to illustrate, whatever is fairly susceptible of illustration, with finely executed wood-engravings — after the fashion of Gigoux's "Gil Blas" or "Grandville's Gulliver" — and I wish to get

a tale from Mr. Hawthorne as early as possible (if I am so fortunate as to get one at all), that I may put the illustration in the hands of the artist.

You will see by the Prospectus that we intend to give a series of portraits of the American literati, with critical sketches. I would be glad if I could so arrange matters as to have you *first*, provided you yourself have no serious objection. Instead of the "full-length portraits" promised in the Prospectus (which will be modified in the specimen sheet), we shall have medallions about three inches in diameter. Could you put me in possession of any likeness of yourself? — or would you do me the same favor in regard to Mr. Hawthorne? — You perceive I proceed upon the ground that you are intimate with Mr. H., and that making these inquiries would not subject you to trouble or inconvenience.

I confess that I am by no means so conversant with your own compositions (especially in prose), as I should be. Could you furnish me with some biographical and critical data, and tell me when or how I could be put in possession of your writings generally? — but I fear I am asking altogether too much.

If the 4th number of "The Pioneer" is printed, I would be obliged if you would send me an early copy through the P. O.

Please remember me to Mr. Carter, and believe me

Most sincerely your friend,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

J. RUSSELL LOWELL, ESQ^re^.

Before the "Pioneer" was discontinued, after its third number, Poe had contributed to it "The Tell-

[1] Poe to Lowell. MS.

Tale Heart," the third of the tales of conscience; "Lenore," a greatly revised version of his old "Pæan;" and "Notes upon English Verse," a purely metrical discussion, which he afterwards remoulded into the "Rationale of Verse." During the same time he published in Miss Leslie's annual, "The Gift," for 1843, "The Pit and the Pendulum," a tale of no striking originality; and in "Graham's" the fine poem entitled "The Conqueror Worm," and "Flaccus" (the second of the series called "Our Amateur Poets"), a satirical review of one Thomas Ward, which he himself regarded as in his best manner.

Meanwhile the "Stylus" had been abandoned, and when the first of July came it found Poe sick and poor. On June 11 he wrote to Griswold a characteristic note: —

DEAR GRISWOLD: — Can you not send me $5? I am sick and Virginia is almost gone. Come and see me. Peterson says you suspect me of a curious anonymous letter. I did not write it, but bring it along with you when you make the visit you promised to Mrs. Clemm. I will try to fix that matter soon. Could you do anything with my *note?*

Yours truly,
E. A. P.[1]

It was probably in response to this letter that Griswold called upon him at his home, No. 7 Spring Garden, of which he gave a description: —

"When once he sent for me to visit him, during a

[1] Griswold, xx.

period of illness caused by protracted and anxious watching at the side of his sick wife, I was impressed by the singular neatness and the air of refinement in his home. It was in a small house, in one of the pleasant and silent neighborhoods far from the centre of the town, and though slightly and cheaply furnished everything in it was so tasteful and so fitly disposed that it seemed altogether suitable for a man of genius. For this and for most of the comforts he enjoyed, in his brightest as in his darkest years, he was chiefly indebted to his mother-in-law, who loved him with more than maternal devotion and constancy."[1]

To this same period of unusual poverty and suffering Mayne Reid's characterization of Mrs. Clemm probably belongs: —

"She was the ever-vigilant guardian of the home, watching it against the silent but continuous sap of necessity, that appeared every day to be approaching closer and nearer. She was the sole servant, keeping everything clean; the sole messenger, doing the errands, making pilgrimages between the poet and his publishers, frequently bringing back such chilling responses as 'The article not accepted,' or 'The check not to be given until such and such a day,' — often too late for his necessities. And she was also the messenger to the market; from it bringing back not 'the delicacies of the season,' but only such commodities as were called for by the dire exigencies of hunger."[2]

He remembered the house as "a lean-to of three

[1] Griswold, xxxiv.

[2] *Onward*, quoted in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 30, 1869.

of painted plank construction, supported against the gable of the more pretentious dwelling," — the latter being a four story red-brick mansion of a wealthy Quaker. But Mr. T. C. Clarke, whose family visited the Poes more or less frequently, describes it as a cottage set back from the street amid luxuriant grape and other vines, and ornamented in winter with flowers. There he especially remembered the childish wife, slowly wasting away in consumption, but "wearing on her beautiful countenance the smile of resignation, and the warm, even cheerful look with which she ever greeted her friends."[1] The appearance of the house, however, and the simple hospitality which he and Mayne Reid and others enjoyed in it, must have varied materially with the rapacity of the pawnbroker; and it is said that the family now became the object of charity.

The principal income during these trying months was the one-hundred-dollar prize received by Poe from "The Dollar Newspaper," edited by Joseph Sailor, for the story of "The Gold Bug," which he had recovered from Graham by exchanging a critical article for it, and had sent in to the judges. This, the most widely circulated of his tales, was published in two parts: the first June 21, 1843, and the second (together with the first, which was reprinted) a week later. On July 12 it was pub-

[1] Gill, p. 161.



lished again with two other prize tales in a supplement. A charge that it was plagiarized from Miss Sherburne's "Inogene, or The Pirate's Treasure," was made in "The Spirit of the Times," and was widely circulated, but a refutation was quickly attempted in "The Dollar Newspaper," July 19. The only other stories of Poe's published during this year were the fearful tale of "The Black Cat" in the "United States Saturday Post" (as the old "Saturday Evening Post" was now called), August 19, and "Morning on the Wissahiccon," a quiet landscape sketch of the environs of Philadelphia (evidently "The Elk," mentioned hereafter), contributed to Willis's annual, "The Opal," for 1844. In criticism he published three reviews, all in "Graham's:" one, perhaps the most contemptuous he ever wrote, on William Ellery Channing, the transcendentalist poet, being the third of the series "Our Amateur Poets;" one on Fitz-Greene Halleck, being No. viii. of "Our Contributors," a series of which the plan seems to have been taken from that projected by Poe for the "Stylus;" and one of a perfunctory kind on Cooper's "Wyandotte." In the fall an edition of his "Tales," in parts, was undertaken, but only one issue, containing "The Murders of the Rue Morgue" and "The Man who was Used Up," is known.[1]

Poe still interested himself from time to time in the solution of cryptographs, an occupation which

[1] *The New Mirror*, September, 1843.

topics, sufficiently illustrates : —

PHILA., *Aug.* 28, 1843.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have just rec^{d} your letter, enclosing one in hieroglyphical writing from Mr. Meek, and hasten to reply, since *you* desire it; although, some months ago, I was obliged to make a vow that I would engage in the solution of no more cryptographs. The reason of my making this vow will be readily understood. Much curiosity was excited throughout the country by my solutions of these cyphers, and a great number of persons felt a desire to test my powers individually — so that I was at one time absolutely overwhelmed; and this placed me in a dilemma; for I had either to devote my whole time to the solutions, or the correspondents would suppose me a mere boaster, incapable of fulfilling my promises. I had no alternative but to solve all; but to each correspondent I made known my intentions to solve no more. You will hardly believe me when I tell you that I have lost, in time, which to me is money, more than a thousand dollars, in solving ciphers, with no other object in view than that just mentioned. A really difficult cipher requires vast labor and the most patient thought in its solution. Mr. Meek's letter is very simple indeed, and merely shows that he misapprehends the whole matter. It runs thus : —

[Here follows the solution.]

This is the whole of Mr. Meek's letter — but he is mistaken in supposing that I "pride myself" upon my solutions of ciphers. I feel little pride about anything.

It is very true, as he says, that cypher writing is "no



great difficulty if the signs represent invariably the same letters and are divided into separate words." But the fact is, that most of the criptographs sent to me (Dr. Frailey's for instance) were *not* divided into words, and moreover, the signs *never* represented the same letter twice.

But here is an infallible mode of showing Mr. Meek that he knows nothing about the matter. He says cipher, writing "is no great difficulty if the signs represent invariably the same letters and are divided into separate words." This is true; and yet, little as this difficulty is, he cannot surmount it. Send him, as if from yourself, these few words, in which the conditions stated by him are rigidly preserved. I will answer for it, he cannot decipher them for his life. They are taken at random from a well-known work now lying beside me: —

[there follows Poe's cryptograph.]

And now, my dear friend, have you forgotten that I asked you, some time since, to render me an important favor? You can surely have no scruples in a case of this kind. I have reason to believe that I have been maligned by some envious scoundrel in this city, who has written you a letter respecting myself. I believe I know the villain's name. It is Wilmer. In Philadelphia no one speaks to him. He is avoided by all as a reprobate of the lowest class. Feeling a deep pity for him, I endeavoured to befriend him, and you remember that I rendered myself liable to some censure by writing a review of his filthy pamphlet called the "Quacks of Helicon." He has returned my good offices by slander behind my back. *All* here are anxious to have him convicted — for there is scarcely a gentleman in Phila^a^ whom he has not libelled,

me his letter to you. It is your *duty* to do this — and I am sure, upon reflection, you will so regard it.

I await your answer impatiently.

Your friend, E. A. Poe.[1]

Wilmer probably ill deserved this tirade, since, after Poe's death, he was one of his most faithful defenders. Scandal, however, was busy with Poe's name, and found its way into print in one of the city papers, in an article of which Poe suspected Griswold to be the author. There is some evidence, as will be seen later on, that he visited Saratoga this summer; but the illness of himself and his wife, and the poverty of the family, together with his seemingly uninterrupted employment in Philadelphia, go to discredit the story.

After the fall came, the only information concerning him at this obscure period is derived from his letters to Lowell: —

Philadelphia, *Oct.* 19, 1843.

My Dear Friend,

I was upon the point of fulfilling a long neglected duty and replying to Mr. Carter's letter, enclosing $5, when I received yours of the 13th, remitting $5 more. Believe me I am sincerely grateful to you both for your uniform kindness and consideration.

You say nothing of your health — but Mr. C. speaks of its perfect restoration, and I see, by your very MS., that you are well again, body and mind. I need not say that

[1] Poe to John Tomlin, Esq. MS.



about happening to myself.

I shall look with much anxiety for your promised volume. Will it include your "Year's Life," and other poems already published? I hope that it may; for these have not yet been fairly placed before the eye of the world. I am seeking an opportunity to do you justice in a review, and may find it in "Graham," when your book appears. No poet in America has done so much. I have maintained this upon all occasions. Mr. Longfellow has genius, but by no means equals you in the true spirit. He is moreover so prone to imitation that I know not how to understand him at times. I am in doubt whether he should not be termed an arrant plagiarist. You have read his "Spanish Student"? I have written quite a long notice of it for Graham's December number. The play is a poor composition, with some fine poetical passages. His "Hymn to the Night," with some strange blemishes, is glorious. — How much I should like to interchange opinions with you upon poems and poets in general! I fancy that we should agree, usually, in results, while differing, frequently, about principles. The day may come when we can discuss everything at leisure, in person.

You say that your long poem has taught you a useful lesson, — "that you are unfit to write narrative — unless in a dramatic form." It is not you that are unfit for the task — but the task for you — for any poet. Poetry must eschew narrative — except, as you say, dramatically. I mean to say that the *true* poetry — the highest

poetry — must eschew it. The Iliad is *not* the highest. The connecting links of a narrative — the frequent passages which have to serve the purpose of binding together the parts of the story, are necessarily prose, from their very explanatory nature. To color them — to gloss over their prosaic nature — (for this is the most which can be done) requires great skill. Thus Byron, who was no artist, is always driven, in his narrative, to fragmentary passages, eked out with asterisks. Moore succeeds better than any one. His "Alciphron" is wonderful in the force, grace, and nature of its purely narrative passages: — but pardon me for prosing.

I send you the paper with my life and portrait. The *former* is true in general — the latter particularly false. It does not convey the faintest idea of *my* person. No one of my family recognized it. But this is a point of little importance. You will see, upon the back of the biography, an announcement that I was to assume the editorship of the "Museum." This was unauthorized. I never did edit it. The review of "Graham's Magazine" was written by H. B. Hirst — a young poet of this city. Who is to write your life for "Graham?" It is a pity that so many of those biographies were entrusted to Mr. Griswold. He certainly lacks independence, or judgment, or both.

I have tried in vain to get a copy of your "Year's Life" in Philadelphia. If you have one, and could spare it, I would be much obliged.

Do write me again when you have leisure, and believe me,

Your most sincere friend,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

J. R. LOWELL, ESQRE.

[1] Poe to Lowell. MS.

At some time during the summer Poe is said to have made his *début* as a lecturer in the "Egyptian Hall," Baltimore. He appeared in Philadelphia in the same rôle, November 25, and made a favorable impression. His subject was "The Poets and Poetry of America," and, while the lecture was largely compiled from his former book-reviews, it was especially distinguished by an attack, which seems to have been unusually severe, on Griswold's volume. At some time before this date, and probably at the very beginning of the year, there had appeared in the "Saturday Museum" an anonymous review of the third edition of Griswold's work, in which that reverend gentleman was held up to public ridicule in the most scoffing and bitter style, and contrasted with Poe by name, much to the latter's praise and to his own degradation. This mingled expression of pique, wrath, and scorn, with its flaunting self-commendation, is indubitably Poe's own work, but as it was unacknowledged Griswold had no plain ground for a personal quarrel. About the utterances of the lecture, however, he could have no doubt, and the flagellation he received in it, which does not seem to have displeased his literary associates, caused an open breach between himself and Poe that was not closed, even in appearance, until a year and a half had elapsed. It is worthy of note that Griswold had left his place on "Graham's" about two months before the delivery of the address.

could not have been large, and for the cause of another the editors who were accustomed to publish Poe's work either would not buy it, or else delayed to print it. After Griswold's retirement from "Graham's," Poe seems to have held during the winter the post of assistant to Graham, by far the larger part of the reviews being from his hand. In March, 1844, appeared his only signed article for several months past, a lengthy review of the drama, "Orion," by Richard Hengist Horne, recently published in England. Of this work, which appealed strongly to Poe's delight in pictorial fancy and subdued mystical suggestion, he declared, "It is our deliberate opinion that in all that regards the loftiest and holiest attributes of the true Poetry, 'Orion' has *never* been excelled. Indeed, we feel strongly inclined to say that it has never been *equaled*." After comparing one passage of it with Milton's description of hell, the latter being "*altogether inferior* in graphic effect, in originality, in expression, in the true imagination," he concludes more calmly that "'Orion' will be admitted, by every man of genius, to be one of the noblest, if not the very noblest poetical work of the age." [1]

Whether or not Poe had been taken back by Graham to be his unacknowledged assistant, he had now formed a new scheme, which is as fine a piece of literary visionariness as was ever elabo-

[1] *Works*, ii. 437–444.



rated by a penniless author. He unfolds it in the following letter to Lowell, which also contains other matter of contemporary interest.

PHILADELPHIA, March 30, 1844.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Graham has been speaking to me, lately, about your Biography, and I am anxious to write it at once, always provided you have no objection. Could you forward me the materials within a day or two? I am just now quite disengaged — in fact positively idle.

I presume you have read the Memoir of Willis, in the April number of G. It is written by a Mr. Landor — but I think it full of hyperbole. Willis is *no* genius — a graceful trifler — no more. He wants force and sincerity. He is very frequently far-fetched. In me, at least, he never excites an emotion. Perhaps the best poem he has written is a little piece called "Unseen Spirits," beginning "The Shadows lay — Along Broadway."

You inquire about my own portrait. It has been done for some time — but is better as an engraving, than as a portrait. It scarcely resembles me at all. When it will appear I cannot say. Conrad and Mrs. Stephens will certainly come before me — perhaps Gen. Morris. My Life is not yet written, and I am at a sad loss for a Biographer — for Graham insists upon leaving the matter to myself.

I sincerely rejoice to hear of the success of your volume. To sell eleven hundred copies of a bound book of American poetry, is to do wonders. I hope everything from your future endeavors. Have you read "Orion?" Have you seen the article on "American

Poetry" in the "London Foreign Quarterly?" It has been denied that Dickens wrote it — but, to me, the article affords so strong internal evidence of his hand that I would as soon think of doubting my existence. He tells much truth — although he evinces much ignorance and more spleen. Among other points he accuses myself of "metrical imitation" of Tennyson, citing, by way of instance, passages from poems which were written and published by me long before Tennyson was heard of: — but I have at no time made any poetical pretention. I am greatly indebted for the trouble you have taken about the lectures, and shall be very glad to avail myself, next season, of any invitation from the "Boston Lyceum." Thank you, also, for the hint about the North American Review; — I will bear it in mind. I mail you, herewith, a "Dollar Newspaper," containing a somewhat extravagant tale of my own. I fear it will prove little to your taste.

How dreadful is the present condition of our Literature! To what are things tending? We want two things, certainly: — an International Copy-Right Law, and a well-founded Monthly Journal, of sufficient ability, circulation, and character, to control and so give tone to, our Letters. It should be, externally, a specimen of high, but not too refined Taste: — I mean, it should be boldly printed, on excellent paper, in single column, and be illustrated, not merely embellished, by spirited wood designs in the style of Grandville. Its chief aims should be Independence, Truth, Originality. It should be a Journal of some 120 pp, and furnished at $5. It should have nothing to do with Agents or Agencies. Such a Magazine might be made to exercise a prodigious in-

fluence, and would be a source of vast wealth to its proprietors. There *can* be no reason why 100,000 copies might not, in one or two years, be circulated; but the means of bringing it into circulation should be radically different from those usually employed.

Such a journal might, perhaps, be set on foot by a coalition, and, thus set on foot, with proper understanding, would be irresistible. Suppose, for example, that the élite of our men of letters should combine secretly. Many of them control papers, &c. Let each subscribe, say $200, for the commencement of the undertaking; furnishing other means, as required from time to time, until the work be established. The articles to be supplied by the members solely, and upon a concerted plan of action. A nominal editor to be elected from among the number. How could such a journal fail? I would like very much to hear your opinion upon this matter. Could not the "ball be set in motion?" If we do *not* defend ourselves by some such coalition, we shall be devoured, without mercy, by the Godeys, the Snowdens, *et id genus omne.*

Most truly your friend,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

The next week after writing this letter Poe put in execution what seems a very sudden determination to leave Philadelphia. Possibly the discontinuance of his undefined connection with "Graham's," which now took place, finally discouraged him; but whatever was the immediate occasion of his decision, looking back over the five years of his

[1] Poe to Lowell. MS.

life in that city, with its delusively brilliant openings and sharp reverses of fortune, he must have felt that he obeyed the dictates of worldly prudence in deserting a scene where his repeated failures and their causes were well known to the whole literary fraternity. He seems to have broken up his home at the cottage before this time, and he had not much more than ten dollars in his pocket when he left. Mrs. Clemm remained behind to sell his books and settle up affairs, and with Virginia he went to New York, apparently with no more definite a view than to make a new start in a new community.

CHAPTER VI.

IN NEW YORK.

Poe's account of his departure is given in a letter to Mrs. Clemm, which stands by itself in his correspondence as of a purely domestic kind, illustrative of life within doors, and (the more forcibly by its indirectness) of the penury to which at times the family was accustomed. Its confiding and familiar tone explains somewhat, too, how he won the devotion of his mother-in-law to that degree which has secured for her the admiration of all who were intimately acquainted with Poe's home life.

{ New York, *Sunday Morning,*
{ *April 7, just after breakfast.*

My Dear Muddy,

We have just this minute done breakfast, and I now sit down to write you about everything. I can't pay for the letter, because the P. O. won't be open to-day. In the first place we arrived safe at Walnut St. wharf. The driver wanted to make me pay a dollar, but I would n't. Then I had to pay a boy a levy to put the trunks in the baggage car. In the meantime I took Sis [Virginia] in the Depôt Hotel. It was only a quarter past six, and we had to wait till seven. We saw the Ledger and Times — nothing in either — a few words of no account

in the Chronicle. We started in good spirits, but did not get here until nearly three o'clock. We went in the cars to Amboy, about forty miles from N. York, and then took the steamboat the rest of the way. Sissy coughed none at all. When we got to the wharf it was raining hard. I left her on board the boat, after putting the trunks in the Ladies' cabin, and set off to buy an umbrella and look for a boarding-house. I met a man selling umbrellas, and bought one for twenty-five cents. Then I went up Greenwich St. and soon found a boarding house. It is just before you get to Cedar St., on the west side going up — the left-hand side. It has brown stone steps, with a porch with brown pillars. "Morrison" is the name on the door. I made a bargain in a few minutes and then got a hack and went for Sis. I was not gone more than half an hour, and she was quite astonished to see me back so soon. She did n't expect me for an hour. There were two other ladies waiting on board — so she was n't very lonely. When we got to the house we had to wait about half an hour before the room was ready. The house is old and looks buggy [The letter is cut here for the signature on the other side.] the cheapest board I ever knew, taking into consideration the central situation and the *living*. I wish Kato [Catterina, the cat] could see it — she would faint. Last night, for supper, we had the nicest tea you ever drank, strong and hot — wheat bread and rye bread — cheese — tea-cakes (elegant), a great dish (two dishes) of elegant ham, and two of cold veal, piled up like a mountain and large slices — three dishes of the cakes and everything in the greatest profusion. No fear of starving here. The landlady seemed as if she

could n't press us enough, and we were at home directly. Her husband is living with her — a fat, good-natured old soul. There are eight or ten boarders — two or three of them ladies — two servants. For breakfast we had excellent-flavored coffee, hot and strong — not very clear and no great deal of cream — veal cutlets, elegant ham and eggs and nice bread and butter. I never sat down to a more plentiful or a nicer breakfast. I wish you could have seen the eggs — and the great dishes of meat. I ate the first hearty breakfast I have eaten since I left our little home. Sis is delighted, and we are both in excellent spirits. She has coughed hardly any and had no night sweat. She is now busy mending my pants which I tore against a nail. I went out last night and bought a skein of silk, a skein of thread, two buttons, a pair of slippers, and a tin pan for the stove. The fire kept in all night. We have now got four dollars and a half left. To-morrow I am going to try and borrow three dollars, so that I may have a fortnight to go upon. I feel in excellent spirits, and have n't drank a drop — so that I hope soon to get out of trouble. The very instant I scrape together enough money I will send it on. You can't imagine how much we both do miss you. Sissy had a hearty cry last night, because you and Catterina were n't here. We are resolved to get two rooms the first moment we can. In the mean time it is impossible we could be more comfortable or more at home than we are. It looks as if it were going to clear up now. Be sure and go to the P. O. and have my letters forwarded. As soon as I write Lowell's article, I will send it to you, and get you to get the money from Graham. Give our best love to C.

[Signature cut out.]

The postscript of this letter, — "Be sure and take home the 'Messenger' to Hirst," — though a matter of the most trifling detail, is worth explanation, since the circumstance to which it relates is yet remembered to Poe's discredit in Philadelphia, while the whole paltry affair furnishes a capital illustration of the mean though natural misconstruction to which he was sometimes exposed. The story is completely told in the following papers. Willis Duane, to whom the letters are addressed, was at one time Secretary of the Treasury.

NEW YORK, *Oct.* 28, '44.

MY DEAR SIR,

Owing to my absence from this city, (where I am now residing) I did not receive your letter of the 15th until this morning.

I regret exceedingly that circumstances should have led you to think me negligent, or uncourteous, in not returning the volume of the "Messenger" — for one or the other (perhaps both) you must long since have considered me. The facts are these: Some eight months ago, I believe, I chanced to mention, in Mr. Hirst's hearing, that I wished to look over a particular article in the "Messenger." He immediately volunteered to procure me the desired volume from you. I would much rather have borrowed it personally — but he seemed to make a point of the matter and I consented. Soon afterwards he handed me the book, which I retained a very short

[1] Poe to Mrs. Clemm. MS.

time. It is now certainly more than seven months since I returned it to Mr. Hirst, through my mother-in-law (Mrs. Clemm) who informs me that she left it at his office, with one of his brothers. Most probably it was deposited in a book-case, and thus overlooked and forgotten. May I trouble you to send for it.

Very truly yours,
EDGAR ALLAN POE.

WILLIS DUANE, ESQR.

Endorsed by Duane: N. B. The statement contained in this letter that the volume of "The Southern Literary Messenger" in question was returned to Henry B. Hirst, Esqr. was pronounced by Mr. Hirst to be "a damned lie," and subsequent events showed that Mr. Hirst was right in denying it — Mr. Poe having sold the book — I hope unintentionally — to William A. Leary, the bookseller on Second St.

W. D.

NEW YORK, *Jan.* 28, '45.

SIR,

Richmond is the last place in which I should have hoped to find a copy of either the 1st, 2d, or 3d volumes of the "Messenger." For this reason I did not apply there. I have [been] putting myself, however, to some trouble in endeavoring to collect among my friends here the separate numbers of the *missing* volume. I am glad that your last letter relieves me from all *such* trouble in future. I do not choose to recognize you in this matter at all. To the person of whom I borrowed the book, or rather who insisted on forcing it on me, I have sufficient reason to believe that it was returned. Settle your diffi-

culties with him, and insult me with no more of your communications.

EDGAR A. POE.

MR. DUANE.

Endorsed by Duane: Bombastes Furioso Poe. Dated January 28, 1845. Received January 31, 1845. Not to be answered. N. B. The volume of "The Southern Literary Messenger" to which this letter, and that of October 28, 1844, refer, was lent by me to E. A. Poe, through Henry B. Hirst, Esq., and was sold by the said Poe among a lot of books belonging to himself to William A. Leary, a bookseller on North Seventh Street. Mr. Leary sold it to a bookseller in Richmond, Va., who sold it to the publishers of the "Messenger," who sold it to a friend of mine who was visiting Richmond, and whom I had commissioned to purchase me a copy. My name was on the title page during all these sales.

Poe had the grace to be ashamed of himself, when he heard of the manner in which I had had to repurchase my own book. He remarked to H. B. Hirst, Esqr., "What must Mr. Duane *think of me*," *on hearing of* which, I sent him word that I thought he ought to send me the five dollars which the repurchase had cost me. He died without doing so, I suppose from inability.

W. D.[1]

Poe's innocence in the matter seems to be proved by the postscript to Mrs. Clemm, nor is there any reason to believe that the original mistake, by which the volume was included in the sale of Poe's books, was anything but a natural blunder made

[1] Poe to Duane. MSS.

in the confusion of the removal, — one, however, which Mrs. Clemm, probably out of short-sighted regard for Poe's feelings, may have been unwilling to acknowledge.

Poe's first business in New York after he got settled was presumably to call on the editor of "The Sun," and offer him the well-known "Balloon Hoax." At least on the following Saturday, April 13, "The Sun" contained a postscript, in double-leaded type, announcing that a balloon had crossed the Atlantic, bringing news, and had arrived at Charleston, S. C., and promising that an extra, giving full particulars, should be issued at ten o'clock on that morning. The extra duly appeared, with its narrative, in Poe's usual realistic manner, of a transatlantic voyage by a party of English aeronauts; and at a time when such journalistic fictions were more common and less easily detected than now, it achieved a momentary success. In the same month appeared the picturesque story of metempsychosis, "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains," in "Godey's Lady's Book." No other publications during this spring, except the poem "Dreamland" in "Graham's" for June, have been traced.

The only direct source of information regarding Poe during these first months in New York is his correspondence with Lowell, who now offered to write his life for the series, "Our Contributors," then appearing in "Graham's." Poe replied as follows: —

NEW YORK, *May* 28, '44.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received yours last night, forwarded from Philadelphia to this city, where I intend living for the future. Touching the Biography — I would be very proud, indeed, if you would write it, and did, certainly, say to myself, and I believe to Graham — that such was my wish; but as I fancied the job might be disagreeable, I did not venture to suggest it to yourself. Your offer relieves me from great embarrassment, and I thank you sincerely. You will do me justice; and that I could not expect at all hands.

Herewith, I mail you a Life written some time since by Hirst, from materials furnished principally by Thomas and Mr. T. W. White. It is correct, I think, in the main (barring extravagant eulogy), and you can select from it whatever you deem right. The limit is 6 pp. of Graham — as much less as you please. Besides the Tales enumerated in the foot-note, I have written "The Spectacles;" "*The Oblong Box;*" "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains;" "*The Premature Burial;*" "*The Purloined Letter;*" "*The System of Doctors Tar and Fether;*" "The Black Cat;" "The Elk;" "Diddling Considered as one of the Exact Sciences;" "*Mesmeric Revelation;*" "The Gold Bug;" "*Thou art the Man;*" about 60 altogether, including the "Grotesque and Arabesque." Those italicized are as yet unpublished — in the hands of different editors. Of the "Gold Bug" (my most successful tale), more than 300,000 copies have been circulated.

There is an article on "American Poetry" in a late number of the London Foreign Quarterly, in which some

allusion is made to me, as a poet, and as an imitator of Tennyson. I would like you to say (in my defense) what is the fact: that the passages quoted as imitations were written and published, in Boston, before the issue of even Tennyson's first volume. Dickens (*I know*) wrote the article — I have private personal reasons for knowing this. The portrait prepared, does not in the least resemble me.

I wrote you a long letter from Philadelphia about seven weeks since — did you get it? You make no allusion to it. In great haste,

Your most sincere friend,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

The list of the tales still in the hands of editors which this letter gives brings out strongly one source of the discouragement under which Poe had to bear up. He had been for ten years a writer of untiring industry, and in that time had produced an amount of work large in quantity and excellent in quality, much of it belonging in the very highest rank of imaginative prose; but his books had never sold, and the income from his tales and other papers in the magazines had never sufficed to keep the wolf from the door unless he eked out his support by editing. The fact that literature was not a paying profession, however, merely involved as its consequence that Poe was under the necessity of obtaining and keeping an editorial post, if he wished to escape poverty; that he did not realize

[1] Poe to Lowell. MS.

sufficient force of character to govern himself for the sake of the comfort of his home, may have been his fault or his misfortune, but is in either case obvious enough. In spite of all this, nevertheless, it should be constantly kept in mind that Poe had difficulty in selling his work and was very poorly paid. In view of the whole mass of his writings, too, of which a large portion was perishable, what he says of his own indolence in the following letter ought to be taken with some allowance for the tendency he had to idealize his own nature. A poet's analysis of his original temperament, if it be sincere, is of the highest value; for a man's conception of his own character, particularly if he be of an introspective turn, counts often as one of the most powerful influences that shape his acts. In describing himself Poe was not unconscious of the presence of Lowell as his auditor, nor forgetful of the latter's relation to him as his biographer; but the account falls in with other more disinterested utterances by Poe regarding himself, and in general it has an idiosyncratic character that marks it as genuine. In reading it one involuntarily remembers the separate, slight intimations that Poe's life and works have already afforded of his use of drugs; more than once, to the reflective mind, a trait of the opium-eater must have already been startlingly distinct, and though the direct evidence of the habit is very scanty the

indirect evidence is constant, varied, and convincing. In the light of this suggestion the following rhodomontade of philosophy and self-analysis may lose something of its seeming affectation: —

NEW YORK, *July* 2, '44.

MY DEAR MR. LOWELL, — I can feel for the "constitutional indolence" of which you complain — for it is one of my own besetting sins. I am excessively slothful and wonderfully industrious — by fits. There are epochs when any kind of mental exercise is torture, and when nothing yields me pleasure but solitary communion with the "mountains and the woods," — the "altars" of Byron. I have thus rambled and dreamed away whole months, and awake, at last, to a sort of mania for composition. Then I scribble all day, and read all night, so long as the disease endures. This is also the temperament of P. P. Cooke, of Virginia, the author of "Florence Vane," "Young Rosalie Lee," and some other sweet poems — and I should not be surprised if it were your own. Cooke writes and thinks as you — and I have been told that you resemble him personally.

I am *not* ambitious — unless negatively. I now and then feel stirred up to excel a fool, merely because I hate to let a fool imagine that he may excel me. Beyond this I feel nothing of ambition. I really perceive that vanity about which most men merely prate, — the vanity of the human or temporal life. I live continually in a reverie of the future. I have no faith in human perfectibility. I think that human exertion will have no appreciable effect upon humanity. Man is now only more active — not more happy — nor more wise, than he was 6,000

years ago. The result will never vary — and to supp
that it will, is to suppose that the foregone man has li
in vain — that the foregone time is but the rudimen
the future — that the myriads who have perished h
not been upon equal footing with ourselves — nor are
with our posterity. I cannot agree to lose sight of
the individual in man the mass. — I have no belie
spirituality. I think the word a *mere* word. No
has really a conception of spirit. We cannot ima
what is not. We deceive ourselves by the idea of
nitely rarefied matter. Matter escapes the senses by
grees — a stone — a metal — a liquid — the atmosp
— a gas — the luminiferous ether. Beyond this t
are other modifications more rare. But to all we a
the notion of a constitution of particles — atomic co
sition. For this reason only we think spirit diffe
for spirit, we say, is unparticled, and *therefore* i
matter. But it is clear that if we proceed sufficie
far in our ideas of rarefaction, we shall arrive at a
where the particles coalesce; for, although the par
be infinite, the infinity of littleness in the spaces bet
them is an absurdity. — The unparticled matter, p
ating and impelling all things, is God. Its activity
thought of God — which creates. Man, and other thi
beings, are individualizations of the unparticled m
Man exists as a "person," by being clothed with m
(the particled matter) which individualizes him.
habited, his life is rudimental. What we call "d
is the painful metamorphosis. The stars are the l
tions of rudimental beings. But for the necessity
rudimental life, there would have been no world
death, the worm is the butterfly — still material, b

matter unrecognized by our organs — recognized occasionally, perhaps, by the sleep-waker directly — without organs — through the mesmeric medium. Thus a sleep-waker may see ghosts. Divested of the rudimental covering, the being inhabits *space*, — what we suppose to be the immaterial universe, — passing everywhere, and acting all things, by mere volition, cognizant of all secrets but that of the nature of God's volition, — the motion, or activity, of the unparticled matter.

You speak of "an estimate of my life," — and, from what I have already said, you will see that I have none to give. I have been too deeply conscious of the mutability and evanescence of temporal things to give any continuous effort to anything — to be consistent in anything. My life has been *whim* — impulse — passion — a longing for solitude — a scorn of all things present, in an earnest desire for the future.

I am profoundly excited by music, and by some poems, — those of Tennyson especially — whom, with Keats, Shelley, Coleridge (occasionally), and a few others of like thought and expression, I regard as the *sole* poets. Music is the perfection of the soul, or idea, of Poetry. The *vagueness* of exaltation aroused by a sweet air (which should be strictly indefinite and never too strongly suggestive) is precisely what we should aim at in poetry. Affectation, within bounds, is thus no blemish.

I still adhere to Dickens as either author, or dictator, of the review. My reasons would convince you, could I give them to you, but I have left myself no space. I had two long interviews with Mr. D. when here. Nearly everything in the critique, I heard from him, or suggested to him, personally. The poem of Emerson I read to him.

I have been so negligent as not to preserve copies of any of my volumes of poems — nor was either worthy of preservation. The best passages were culled in Hirst's article. I think my best poems "The Sleeper," "The Conqueror Worm," "The Haunted Palace," "Lenore," "Dreamland," and the "Coliseum," — but all have been hurried and unconsidered. My best tales are "Ligeia," the "Gold-Bug," the "Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Fall of the House of Usher," the "Tell-Tale Heart," the "Black Cat," "William Wilson," and "The Descent into the Maelström." "The Purloined Letter," forthcoming in the "Gift," is perhaps the best of my tales of ratiocination. I have lately written for Godey "The Oblong Box" and "Thou art the Man," — as yet unpublished. With this I mail you the "Gold-Bug," which is the only one of my tales I have on hand.

Graham has had, for nine months, a review of mine on Longfellow's "Spanish Student," which I have "used up," and in which I have exposed some of the grossest plagiarisms ever perpetrated. I can't tell why he does not publish it. — I believe G. intends my Life for the September number, which will be made up by the 10th August. Your article should be on hand as soon as convenient. Believe me your true friend,

E. A. Poe.[1]

The philosophic lucubrations in the foregoing were taken from his metaphysical tale, "Mesmeric Revelations," about to be published in the "Columbian Magazine" for August, and were afterwards more fully developed. In his next letter he

[1] Poe to Lowell. MS.

rned to the subject, and gave the noticeable
rmation that he was engaged on his "Critical
story of American Literature," a book at which
kept working until death.

NEW YORK, *August* 18, 1844.

DEAR FRIEND,

With this letter I take the liberty to mail you a num-
of the "Columbian Magazine," in which you will
a paper on "Mesmeric Revelation." In it I have
leavored to amplify some ideas which I suggested in
last letter.

You will observe many corrections and alterations.
fact the article was wofully misprinted; and my prin-
al object in boring you with it now, is to beg of you
favor to get it copied (with corrections) in the
other Jonathan — I mean the Boston Notion — or
y other paper where you have interest. If you can
this without trouble, I would be very deeply indebted
you. I am living so entirely out of the world, just
w, that I can do nothing of the kind myself.

In what are you occupied? — or is it still the far
ente? For myself I am very industrious — collecting
d arranging materials for a Critical History of Ameri-
n Literature. Do you ever see Mr. Hawthorne? He
a man of rare genius. A day or two since I met with
sketch by him called "Drowne's Wooden Image" —
licious. The leading idea, however, is suggested by
lichiel Angelo's couplet: —

Non ha l'ottimo artista alcun concetto
Chè un marmo solo in se non circumscriva.

o be sure Angelo half stole the thought from Socrates.

Two months later he acknowledges the receipt of the biography, which Lowell had sent, September 27, in care of his friend, Mr. C. F. Briggs, Poe's future partner, and again reverts to the scheme for the association of authors in a Magazine Company.

NEW YORK, *Oct.* 28, '44.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

A host of small troubles growing from the *one* trouble of poverty, but which I will not trouble you with in detail, have hitherto prevented me from thanking you for the Biography and all the well-intended flatteries which it contains. But, upon the principle of better late than never, let me thank you now, again and again. I sent it to Graham on the day I received it — taking with it only one liberty in the way of modification. This I hope you will pardon. It was merely the substitution of another brief poem for the last you have done me the honor to quote.

I have not seen your marriage announced, but I presume from what you said in your penultimate letter, that I may congratulate you now. Is it so? At all events I can wish you no better wish than that you may derive from your marriage as substantial happiness as I have derived from mine.

A long time ago I wrote you a long letter to which you have never replied. It concerned a scheme for pro

[1] Poe to Lowell. MS.



dozen of the most active or influential men of letters in this country should unite for the purpose of publishing a magazine of high character. Their names to be kept secret, that their mutual support might be the more effectual. Each member to take a share of the stock at $100 a share. Each, if required, to furnish one article each month — the work to be sustained altogether by the contributions of the members, or by unpaid contributions from others. As many of the members as possible to be taken from those connected otherwise with the press: — a black-ball to exclude any one suggested as a member by those already conjoined — this to secure unanimity. These, of course, are mere hints in the rough. But suppose that (the scheme originating with yourself and me) we write to any others or, seeing them personally, engage them in the enterprise. The desired number being made up, a meeting might be held, and a constitution framed. A point in this latter might be that an editor should be elected periodically from among the stockholders.

The advantages of such a coalition seem to me very great. The Magazine could be started with a positive certainty of success. There would be no expense for contributions, while we would have the best. Plates, of course, would be disdained. The aim would be to elevate without stupefying our literature — to further justice — to resist foreign dictation — and to afford (in the circulation and profit of the journal) a remuneration to ourselves for whatever we should write.

The work should be printed in the very best manner,

and should address the aristocracy of talent. We might safely give, for $5, a pamphlet of 128 pages, and, with the support of the variety of our personal influence, we might easily extend the circulation to 20,000, — giving $100,000. The expenses would not exceed $40,000, — if indeed they reached $20,000 when the work should be fairly established. Thus there would be $60,000 to be divided among twelve, — $5,000 per annum apiece.

I have thought of this matter long and cautiously, and am persuaded that there would be little difficulty in doing even far *more* than I have ventured to suggest.

Do you hear anything more about the Lectures?

Truly yours, E. A. Poe.[1]

It was before the date of this letter that, according to Mr. N. P. Willis, Mrs. Clemm called upon him and solicited employment for Poe, who was then, she said, ill. Willis, who was just converting his weekly paper, the "New Mirror," into the "Evening Mirror," a daily, with a weekly issue in addition, was in need of a subordinate, and in consequence of Mrs. Clemm's visit, whose countenance, he says, in his falsetto style, was made "beautiful and saintly by an evident complete giving up of her life to privation and sorrowful tenderness," Poe was engaged as an assistant — "a mechanical paragraphist," to use Willis's phrase — in the "Mirror" office. There, at a desk in a corner, he sat from nine in the morning until the paper went to press, ready for whatever work might befall. Without a

[1] Poe to Lowell. MS.

smile, or a word of praise or blame, he discharged the duties of the daily routine punctually, listened good-humoredly to the request that he would dull the edge of a criticism or soften a misanthropic sentiment, and conformed with entire fidelity to the suggestions made. Such is Willis's sketch of his subordinate, and he adds in general terms that through a considerable period he saw only "one presentment of the man, — a quiet, patient, industrious, and most gentlemanly person, commanding the utmost respect and good feeling by his unvarying deportment and ability." It needs no keen eye to read between the lines of this highly respectable description the real facts, — that the pay was small, the labor perfunctory and uninteresting, and the spirit of the poet himself, compelled to subdue his saturnine temper to the geniality of his chief, was chafing and burning within. It was a striking instance of Pegasus in harness.

The first number of "The Evening Mirror" appeared October 7, 1844, and the next day the literary columns contained this passage upon Elizabeth Barrett Browning: —

> "Miss Barrett is worth a dozen of Tennyson and six of Motherwell — equal perhaps in original genius to Keats and Shelley."

Two months later this was followed up by another unmistakable sentence on the same poetess: —

> "We do not believe there is a poetical soul embodied

in this world that — as a centre of thought — sees further out toward the periphery permitted to angels, than Miss Barrett." [1]

These critical dicta could have been no one's but Poe's; and as his hand is readily discerned in the literary paragraphing at many other points, it is most likely that he was employed on the daily from its start. It is as certain, on the other hand, as internal evidence can make it that he never before this time, as has been stated,[2] made one of Willis's staff of writers.

Nothing of Poe's in the "Mirror" during the first three months requires notice; but meanwhile his old pieces in editors' hands had got published: the two inferior grotesques, "The Oblong Box" and "Thou art the Man," in "Godey's" for September and October; "The Literary Life of Thingum Bob," a satirical extravaganza, mainly ridiculous, on the ways of editors and the means of popularity, which had at last found its indulgent victim in the "Southern Literary Messonger" for December,

[1] *Evening Mirror*, December 7, 1844.

[2] Ingram, i. 248. The statement that Poe contributed translations from the French to the *New Mirror* from April, 1843, to its discontinuance (which is wrongly said to have taken place before Poe left Philadelphia), and signed them with his initials, rests on a negligent examination of the files. The translations referred to begin January 3, 1843 (i. 9), and are signed E. P.; they continue to the end, but afterwards they are also signed at the beginning of the articles "By a Lady." (For example, i. 307, 355, etc.) They are, moreover, from authors whom there is no evidence that Poe read.

where it appeared anonymously; "The Purloined Letter," in the "Gift" for 1845, closing the series of the ratiocinative tales. In the "Democratic Review" for November and December, too, the first installments of the miscellaneous notes called "Marginalia" were issued; and as one reads them and the later collections, which continued to be published until Poe died, one cannot but admire the audacity of their author, who could thus resell clippings from his old book reviews since the beginning of his career, by merely giving them a new title. It was a dexterous filching back from Time of the alms for oblivion already given and stored away in that capacious wallet. Doubtless Poe looked on editors as fair game, — if they would not buy his new tales, let them purchase his old criticisms. But now an event occurred that made any manuscripts by Poe treasure-trove. Probably the editors, who had almost emptied their pigeon-holes of his accumulated contributions, were sorry they had not delayed longer.

In the "Evening Mirror," January 29, 1845, "The Raven" [1] was published, with a highly *com-*

[1] *The author is indebted to an unpublished paper by Professor* W. E. Griffis for the earliest mention of "The Raven," which, on evidence satisfactory to Professor Griffis, was in the course of composition in the summers of 1842 and 1843. The legend, however, involves the assertion that Poe, at the time of his greatest poverty in Philadelphia, *was visiting a pleasure resort near Saratoga* Springs. Of this there is no documentary proof, and in the author's opinion it is highly improbable; the story is therefore not included in the text.

mendatory card from Willis; and a few days later "The American Whig Review" for February, from the advance sheets of which this poem had been copied, was the centre of literary interest and the prey of editorial scissors throughout the length and breadth of the country. In the magazine the author was masked under the pseudonym "Quarles," but in this journal he had been named as E. A. Poe. The popular response was instantaneous and decisive. No great poem ever established itself so immediately, so widely, and so imperishably in men's minds. "The Raven" became, in some sort, a national bird, and the author the most notorious American of the hour. It happened — and for this Godey and Graham must have blessed their stars — that in their respective magazines of this same month the former published "The Thousand-and-Second Tale," the voyage of Sinbad among the wonders made known by modern science, and the latter Lowell's sketch of Poe.

One cannot help wondering whether Poe felt no misgiving when he read the latter, with its falsifications of fact, and in the first heat of an assured fame reflected that these might some day be inquired into. Not to mention minor representations, the third misstatement of his birth (1813), the romance of his expedition to St. Petersburg, and the assertion that he left West Point on account of the birth of a son and heir to Mr. Allan, he knew to be untrue; even if he were not respon-

sible for the original errors (the assumption is absurd) in the previous sketches of him by Griswold and Hirst, he furnished the latter's biography as the source of information, and he himself revised Lowell's own article four months before its publication. Poe circulated, and so far as he could practically accredited, falsehoods concerning himself; moreover, he approved the report of his wildness in youth, and he took no pains to explain the questionable incidents of his career. One single poor defense for his conduct, in this particular instance, he left his biographer in the guarded sentence in his letter to Lowell, in which he describes the "Museum" Life as correct "in the main." Similar untruths, however, in regard to himself occur in his letters and other writings, although it has not been thought necessary to call special attention to them in each case. This failing casts suspicion upon all unsupported assertions by him that directly affect himself.

The first trial Poe made of the value of his popularity was to lecture in the library of the New York Historical Society, on February 28, when between two and three hundred persons gathered to hear him. His subject was, as before, American Poetry, and in substance the address was the old monologue, sharp, bitter, and grim, on the sins of editors and the stupidity of versifiers, relieved only by the recitation of a few fine poems and too generous praise where he thought praise was due.

He dealt with Mrs. Sigourney, Mrs. Welby, Mrs. Osgood, Seba Smith, the Davidsons, Bryant, Halleck, Longfellow, Sprague, and Dana. The inference is that the lecture was made up by piecing together his old book reviews, and was probably textually the same with that delivered at Philadelphia, except that he now omitted reference to Griswold, with whom he was endeavoring to renew his acquaintance, plainly from selfish motives. He was still playing the part of the fearless critic, and he found some listeners to follow Lowell's lead and commend him for his daring, while they acknowledged the usefulness of his ungracious service; but there were many more in whose minds his words rankled. He was a good speaker, having natural gifts of elocution and an effective manner. Willis, in noticing the lecture, sketches him with the elegant facility that now, to our changed taste, reads so much like nonsense: —

"He becomes a desk, — his beautiful head showing like a statuary embodiment of Discrimination; his accent drops like a knife through water, and his style is so much purer and clearer than the pulpit commonly gets or requires that the effect of what he says, besides other things, pampers the ear." [1]

The lecture over, Poe returned to his work upon the "Mirror," which he had already got into trouble by an attack on Longfellow's collection of minor fugitive poems, called "The Waif;" but in

[1] *Evening Mirror*, March 12, 1845.

the course of the month he withdrew from the paper, much to the regret of his employer. His contributions to the "Mirror" were of the slightest interest, and contain nothing novel. His connection with it had inured to his own benefit by the frequent puffs of himself, both direct and indirect, which it published, and by the literary introductions which his position afforded him. He was, however, always dissatisfied with his situation, and before half a year had passed practically used the "Mirror" to advertise for a better place. In the same issue that reprinted Lowell's critical estimate of him, he is editorially praised, his capacities as a magazine editor pointed out, and himself described as "ready for propositions."[1] No proposition of the kind was made, but an arrangement was entered into by which he became associated with Charles F. Briggs, then known as "Harry Franco," in the management of the "Broadway Journal," a weekly which had issued its first number on the 4th of January previous.

Briggs was a writer of light literature, from Nantucket, and ambitious of editing a paper. A month before this time he wrote to his friend Lowell, "I have made arrangements for publishing the first number of my long-talked-of paper in January. It will be published by John Bisco, a shrewd Yankee from Worcester, who has been a school-teacher in New Jersey, and was once the publisher of the

[1] *Evening Mirror*, January 20, 1845.

'Knickerbocker.'" Further on he adds, "If you know Poe's address, send it to me when you write."[1] In consequence of this introduction, Poe contributed to the first two numbers of the "Journal" a review of Mrs. Browning, and from that time was a regular writer, at the rate of $1 a column. The impression he made on Briggs is told in the following passages of the latter's correspondence with Lowell: —

"I like Poe exceedingly well; Mr. Griswold has told me shocking bad stories about him, which his whole demeanor contradicts."[2]

"Poe tells me that Graham refused to print his tale of the Gold Bug, and kept it in his possession nine months. I never read it before last week, and it strikes me as among the most ingenious pieces of fiction that I have ever seen. If you have not read it, it will repay you for the trouble when you do. He told me furthermore that the poem which you have quoted from the House of Usher,

> 'In a valley, fair and shady [*sic*]
> By good angels tenanted,' etc.,

he sent to O'Sullivan for the 'Democratic,' and it was returned to him. You see by these what the judgments of Magazine editors amount to. . . . I have always strangely misunderstood Poe, from thinking him one of the Graham and Godey species, but I find him as different as possible. I think that you will like him well when you come to know him personally."[3]

[1] Briggs to Lowell, December 7, 1844. MS.
[2] Briggs to Lowell, January 6, 1845. MS.
[3] Briggs to Lowell, January 27, 1845. MS.

At the beginning of March Poe was announced as a co-editor, with Henry G. Watson and Briggs, of the "Journal;" and for the sake of elucidation it should be added that by this time he was in the thick of the so-called "Longfellow war," in which he was endeavoring to sustain the charge of plagiarism against the poet, and that incidentally he occasionally glanced at Lowell as guilty of the same offense, whether knowingly or not. By following the correspondence, which is the only original authority for this portion of Poe's career, the relations between him and his chief are easily made out. On March 8 Briggs writes, —

"Poe is only an assistant to me, and will in no manner interfere with my own way of doing things. It was requisite that I should have his or some other person's assistance, on account of my liability to be taken off from the business of the paper, and as his name is of some authority I thought it advisable to announce him as an editor. Mr. Watson's name will command the support of a good portion of the musical interest in this city and in Boston, and by putting forth his name as musical editor I can gain his time for a *pro rata* dividend on the amount of patronage which he may obtain. He is the only musical critic in the country and a thorough good fellow. Poe has left the *Mirror*. Willis was too Willisy for him. Unfortunately for him (Poe) he has mounted a very ticklish hobby just now, Plagiarism, which he is bent on riding to death, and I think the better way is to let him run down as soon as possible by giving him no check. Wiley and Putnam are going to

publish a new edition of his tales and sketches. Everybody has been raven-mad about his last poem, and his lecture, which W. Story went with me to hear, has gained him a dozen or two of waspish foes who will do him more good than harm."[1]

A week later, March 16, he returns to the same subject: —

"Poe is a monomaniac on the subject of plagiarism, and I thought it best to allow him to ride his hobby to death in the outset and be done with it. It all commenced with myself. When he was in the *Mirror* office he made what I thought a very unjustifiable charge against my friend Aldrich [James Aldrich], who is one of the best fellows in the world, and I replied to it as you saw. Somebody in Boston, 'Outis,' whose name I forget, replied to P. on behalf of Longfellow and Aldrich, and so the war began. It will end as it began, in smoke. But it will do us some good by calling public attention to our paper. Poe is a much better fellow than you have an idea of. . . . The 'Journal' gains strength every day, and I am very sanguine of success."[2]

Three days later he writes again more fully: —

"I thought it best to gain Poe's services as a critic because he already has a reputation for reviewing, and I could gain them by allowing him a certain portion of the profits of the paper. He thought it would gain the 'Journal' a certain number of subscribers immediately if his name were published in connection with it. I did

[1] Briggs to Lowell. MS.
[2] Briggs to Lowell. MS.

not much like the plan, but he had had more experience than myself in the matter, so I consented. . . . I retain precisely the same authority I did in the beginning. . . . Poe's fol-de-rol about plagiarism I do not like, but the replies which it provokes serve us as advertisements, and help us along. As he dealt more severely by me and my friend Aldrich than anybody else I do not think that anybody has any right to complain of his thumps. I think that you are too sensitive in regard to Longfellow; I really do not see that he has said anything offensive about him. . . . Poe has indeed a very high admiration for Longfellow, and so he will say before he is done. For my own part I did not use to think well of Poe, but my love for you and implicit confidence in your judgment, led me to abandon all my prejudices against him when I read your account of him. The Rev. Mr. Griswold, of Philadelphia, told me some abominable lies about him, but a personal acquaintance with him has induced me to think highly of him. Perhaps some Philadelphian has been whispering foul things in your ear about him. Doubtless his sharp manner has made him many enemies. But you will think better of him when you meet him." [1]

While Briggs was thus explaining his own position and defending Poe from the strictures of Lowell, who had now ceased to correspond with him, the "Broadway Journal" was becoming notorious by this "Longfellow war," which, as Briggs remarked at the time, was "all on one side." The attitude of Poe toward Longfellow has become suf-

[1] Briggs to Lowell. MS.

ficiently clear in the course of the preceding narrative; he was a jealous admirer. The present, and most notorious, embroglio was occasioned by the publication of "The Waif," a collection of fugitive pieces by minor authors, edited by Longfellow. In the "Evening Mirror" Poe had said, —

"We conclude our notes on the 'Waif' with the observation that, although full of beauties, it is infected with a *moral taint* — or is this a mere freak of our own fancy? We shall be pleased if it be so; — but there *does* appear, in this little volume, a very careful avoidance of all American poets who may be supposed especially to interfere with the claims of Mr. Longfellow. These men Mr. Longfellow can continuously *imitate* (*is* that the word?) and yet never incidentally commend."[1]

The discussion thus begun was followed up in succeeding issues with the protests of Longfellow's friends and the editorial comment in reply, extenuating on Willis's part, vindicatory on Poe's, until Willis withdrew from the discussion in a card in which he stated his entire dissent from "all the disparagement of Longfellow" that had been published in the "Mirror;" and soon after he admitted to its columns a lengthy defense of him by one "Outis," at just about the time that Poe left the office to join Briggs.

On March 1 the new editor of the "Broadway Journal" began his reply to "Outis," which was continued in weekly installments through five num-

[1] *Evening Mirror*, January 14, 1845.

bers. As far as it related to Longfellow it repeated textually the charge made in "Burton's" in regard to "The Midnight Mass for the Dying Year;" discredited a letter in which Longfellow had personally explained the error in consequence of which he had translated a song of Motherwell's back into English from the German of Wolff, under the impression that it was original with the latter; and finally charged new plagiarisms, particularly in the case of "The Spanish Student," some scenes of which he traced to his own "Politian" in a violent passage in which probably the old review is incorporated.

To sum up Poe's strictures as urged here and in earlier and later writings, Longfellow was a plagiarist, a didactic poet, and a writer of hexameters. In this there is so much truth as is involved in the milder statement that he belonged to the poets of cultivation rather than of irresistible original genius, that he frequently wrote to illustrate or enforce morality, and that his ear was too little refined to be offended by the spondaic flatness of an English hexameter. That Poe was sincere in his opinions, though he enforced them rudely and with the malicious pleasure of an envious rival, there can be little question; that Longfellow never pilfered from Poe, and that in the unconscious adaptations natural to a poet of culture he never imitated him, there can be no doubt at all. In the elusive search for motives in the case, it is best to remain con-

tent with Longfellow's charitable opinion: "The harshness of his criticisms I have never attributed to anything but the irritation of a sensitive nature, chafed by some indefinite sense of wrong." [1]

Poe's other contributions to the "Journal" during the time that he had "a third interest" (as he described to Griswold his salary of a third of the profits) were plentiful, but not original. The miserable grotesque "Peter Snooks," and the long-rejected tale "The Premature Burial," of which no earlier publication is found, were the only new stories; but of the old ones he reprinted, sometimes with slightly changed names and other revision, "Lionizing," "Berenice," "Bon-Bon," "The Oval Portrait," "The Philosophy of Furniture," "Three Sundays in a Week," "The Pit and the Pendulum," "Eleonora," "Shadow," "The Assignation," and "Morella;" and of his poems, "To F——," "The Sleeper," "To One in Paradise," and "The Conqueror Worm." He also utilized passages from old book-reviews by incorporating them in new notices. His new papers were for the most part hack-work articles on anastatic printing, street-paving, magazine literature, etc., etc.; the only noteworthy pieces being a critical baiting of one W. W. Lord, who had committed the unpardonable sin of plagiarizing from the author of "The Raven," and the exhaustive review of some volumes of Mrs. Browning's, already mentioned.

[1] *Southern Literary Messenger*, November, 1849.

rett is at the conclusion lifted to the highest pinnacle but one: "She has surpassed all her poetical contemporaries of either sex (with a single exception)," that exception being Tennyson.

Outside of the "Journal," Poe contributed to the April "Whig Review" "The Doomed City" and "The Valley Nis," revised, and "Some Words with a Mummy," a grotesque on the old theme that "there is nothing new under the sun," with some unusual satire on politics. Before the end of the year, it may be added here, he had published in the "Democratic" "The Power of Words," a metaphysical tale; in the "Whig," "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," that tale which for mere physical disgust and foul horror has no rival in literature, though in writing it, Poe was much indebted to a romance, "The Seeress of Prevorst," and in the same magazine in July the new poem "Eulalie," and in August the review of "The American Drama" in which he dealt mainly with Willis's "Tortesa," and once more with Longfellow's "Spanish Student" at great length; in "Graham's," "The Imp of the Perverse," the last of the tales of conscience, and the absurd madhouse grotesque "Dr. Tarr and Prof. Fether;" and in "Godey's" two installments of the clippings from old magazines, called "Marginalia." These publications include all his new writings until 1846.

The history of the "Broadway Journal" in the mean time was interesting. When the first volume was approaching its end, Briggs wrote to Lowell, June 29, 1845, reviewing his plans: —

"I have *arrangements on* foot with a new publisher for the Journal who will enable me to give it a fresh start, and I trust very soon to be able to give you an earnest of its profits. I shall haul down Poe's name; he has latterly got into his old habits and I fear will injure himself irretrievably. *I was taken at first with a* certain appearance of independence and learning in his criticisms, but they are so verbal, and so purely selfish that I can no longer have any sympathy with him."[1]

Not long before, Lowell, being on his way from Philadelphia back to Cambridge, called on Poe; but as, in Mrs. Clemm's words to the former, "he was not himself" that day, none of these golden hopes, indulged in by Poe, and at an earlier date by Briggs also, were realized from this personal meeting. The interview, however, prepared Lowell for the following passage in Briggs's next letter, in explanation of what seemed a sudden demise of the "Journal:" — .

"The non-appearance of the 'Broadway Journal' has probably surprised you. I had made arrangements with a new publisher, — a very good business man, — and had agreed upon terms with Biseo to buy his interest; but when I came to close with him he exacted *more* than *I* had stipulated for, and finding that he was determined

[1] Briggs to Lowell. MS.

to give me trouble I refused to do anything with the 'Journal.' I had the first number of the new volume all ready to be issued, with a handsomely engraved title, etc.; but, as I could not put the new publisher's name upon it without Bisco's consent, I let it go a week, meaning to issue a double number — not doubting that I could agree with him upon some terms; but he had fallen into the hands of evil advisors, and became more extortionate than ever. Poe in the meantime got into a drunken spree, and conceived an idea that I had not treated him well, for which he had no other grounds than my having loaned him money, and persuaded Bisco to carry on the 'Journal' himself. As his doing so would give me a legal claim upon him, and enable me to recover something from him, I allowed him to issue one number, but it is doubtful whether he issues another. Mr. Homans, the publisher, with whom I had agreed to undertake the publication of the Journal, is an educated man and a thorough good fellow, with a very extensive book-selling connection. He is still desirous of taking hold of the 'Journal,' and has made me a very liberal offer to go on with him if he can purchase Bisco's share. But I do not yet know how the affair will terminate.

"Poe's mother-in-law told me that he was quite tipsy the day that you called upon him, and that he acted very strangely; but I perceived nothing of it when I saw him in the morning. He was to have delivered a poem before the societies of the New York University a few weeks since, but drunkenness prevented him. I believe he had not drank anything for more than eighteen months until within the past three months, but in this time he has been very frequently carried home in a

wretched condition. I am sorry for him. He has some good points, but, taken altogether, he is badly made up. I was deceived by his superficial talents when I first met him, and relied too much upon the high opinion which you had expressed of him. His learning is very much like that of the famous Mr. Jenkinson in the 'Vicar of Wakefield.' He talks about dactyls and spondees with surprising glibness; and the names of metres being caviare to nine men out of ten, he has gained a reputation for erudition at a very cheap rate. He makes quotations from the German, but he can't read a word of the language." [1]

Some further explanation of the matter was given August 1: —

"I did not give you sufficient particulars to enable you to understand my difficulties with Bisco and Poe. Neither has done anything without my full consent, and I have nothing to complain of but their meanness, which they could n't help. I had told P. a month before that I should drop his name from the 'Journal.' He said I might keep it there if I wanted to, although he intended to go into the country and devote his time to getting up books, and would not therefore be able to assist me. I had also told Bisco that I would have nothing more to do with him after the close of the first volume, and that I would not carry it on unless I could find a publisher to my mind. I did find such a publisher, and Bisco, thinking that I was very anxious to go on with it, was more exacting in his demands for his share of the 'Journal' than I thought just, so I told him

[1] Briggs to Lowell, July 10, 1845. MS.

I would not take it; and he, thinking to spite me, and Poe, thinking to glorify himself in having overmastered me, agreed to go on with it. I laughed at their folly, and told them to go ahead; but I still hold the same right that I ever did, and could displace them both if I wished to do so. But seeing so much poltroonery and littleness in the business gave me a disgust to it, and I let them alone, hoping to get back from Bisco some money which I had advanced him." [1]

Three weeks later he wrote a characterization of Poe more in detail: —

"You have formed a correct estimate of Poe's characterless character. I have never met a person so utterly deficient of high motive. He cannot conceive of anybody's doing anything, except for his own personal advantage; and he says, with perfect sincerity, and entire unconsciousness of the exposition which it makes of his own mind and heart, that he looks upon all reformers as madmen; and it is for this reason that he is so great an egoist. He cannot conceive why the world should not feel an interest in whatever intsrests him, because he feels no interest himself in what does not personally concern him. Therefore, he attributes all the favor which Longfellow, yourself, or anybody else receives from the world as an evidence of the ignorance of the world, and the lack of that favor in himself he attributes to the world's malignity. It is too absurd for belief, but he really thinks that Longfellow owes his fame mainly to the ideas which he has borrowed from his (Poe's) writings in the 'Southern Literary Messenger.' His presumption is

[1] Briggs to Lowell. MS.

beyond the liveliest imagination. He has no reverence for Homer, Shakespeare, or Milton, but thinks that 'Orion' is the greatest poem in the language. He has too much prudence to put his opinions into print, — or, rather, he can find nobody impudent enough to print them, — but he shows himself in his private converse. The Bible, he says, is all rigmarole. As to his Greek, — you might see very well if it were put in your eye. He does not read Wordsworth, and knows nothing about him."[1]

As has been incidentally mentioned above, the "Journal" was suspended for one week; and when the first number of the second volume appeared, a week later, it bore Poe's name as sole editor. Since he describes himself as "one third proprietor," in his old terms, it seems probable that he agreed to go on with Bisco for one third of the profits, just as before, but having entire charge. Bisco himself declares that he meant to get rid of Briggs, and, in order to do so, took up with Poe. There was from the first some financial tangle between the parties, which, fortunately, there is no need to unravel. The result of the difference was to install Poe in full control. One of his acts was to have a fling at Briggs, in connection with which our last extract from the latter's correspondence has its interest: —

"You take Poe's *niaiseries* too seriously. I only cared for his unhandsome allusion to me in the B. J. because it proved him a baser man than I thought him before.

[1] Briggs to Lowell, August 21, 1845. MS.

him from being turned into the street. But he knows that I am possessed of the secret of his real character and he no doubt hates me for it. Until it was absolutely necessary for me to expose some of his practices to save myself from contempt I never breathed a syllable of his ill habits, but I tried in vain to hide them from observation out of pure compassion, for I had not known him long before I lost all respect for him and felt a loathing disgust for his habits. I did not much blame him for the matter of his remarks about Jones, although the manner of them was exceeding improper and unjust; the real cause of his ire was Jones' neglecting to enumerate him among the humorous writers of the country, for he has an inconceivably extravagant idea of his capacities as a humorist. The last conversation I had with Poe he used all his power of eloquence in persuading me to join him in the joint editor-ship of the 'Stylus.'"[1]

Poe remained simply editor, with his third interest for pay, until October. In the first number of his editing was a review of his own "Tales,"[2] just published by Wiley and Putnam as No. 2 in their

[1] Briggs to Lowell, October 13, 1845. MS.

[2] *Tales.* By Edgar A. Poe. New York: Wiley and Putnam. 1845. Pp. 228. The contents are, in order: The Gold Bug, The Black Cat, Mesmeric Revelations, Ligeia, The Fall of the House of Usher, The Descent into the Maelström, The Colloquy of Monos and Una, The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion, The Murders of the Rue Morgue, the Mystery of Marie Roget, The Purloined Letter, The Man in the Crowd.

"Library of American Books," and edited by Duyckinck, who certainly had selected from Poe's numerous and unoven stories those on which his fame has proved itself to be founded. Poe, however, declared in private, "Those selected are *not* my best, nor do they fairly represent me in any respect."[1] He meant that they were too much of one kind, whereas he had aimed at diversity in his writings; in other words, the grotesque tales were slighted, and hence the universality of his genius and the versatility of his talents were not illustrated. During the first months of his editorship he reprinted, as before, his old tales, occasionally somewhat revised: "How to Write a Blackwood Article," "The Masque of the Red Death," "The Literary Life of Thingum-Bob," "The Business Man," "The Man who was Used Up," "Never Bet the Devil your Head," "The Tell-Tale Heart," "William Wilson," "Why the Little Frenchman wears his Hand in a Sling," "The Landscape Garden," "The Tale of Jerusalem," "The Island of the Fay," "MS. Found in a Bottle," "The Duc d'Omelotte,"[2] "King Pest,"[2] "The Power of Words," and "Diddling Considered as one of the Fine Arts." Of his poetry he used "The Coliseum," "Zante," "Israfel," "Silence,"[3] "Science," "Bridal Ballad," "Eulalie," "Lenore,"[2] "A Dream,"[3] "Catholic Hymn,"[4] "Romance,"[3] "City in the

[1] Poe to ———. Ingram, ii. 24.
[2] Signed "Littleton Barry." [3] Signed P. [4] Signed ‡.

Sea," "To the Rivor ——," "The Valley of Unrest," "To F ——," "To ——"[1] ("The bowers whereat"), "Song"[1] ("I saw thee"), and "Fairy-land;"[2] of criticism there was nothing noteworthy except a flattering review of Hirst and a satirical one of Hoyt, both poetasters.

In October occurred one of the best known incidents of Poe's life. In the summer he had visited Boston, and now was invited to give a poem before the Boston Lyceum (it will be remembered that Lowell had at Poe's request formerly interested himself to obtain an engagement for him to lecture before the same organization), and he accepted. On the evening appointed, October 16, a lecture, which was the second of the course, having been given by Caleb Cushing, Poe came forward on the platform of the Odeon, and after some prefatory remarks about the foolishness of didacticism read "Al Aaraaf." The audience, the hour being late, began to disperse, but enough persons remained to enjoy his recitation of "The Raven," with which the entertainment closed. Whatever was the cause, Poe disappointed his audience, and afterwards some Boston papers commented somewhat severely on the performance, especially when the truth came out that the poem given was a juvenile production, written years before. Poe, when he returned to New York, declared that he had acted of malice prepense.

[1] Unsigned. [2] Signed + +.

"It would scarcely be supposed that we would put ourselves to the trouble of composing for the Bostonians anything in the shape of an *original* poem. We did not. We had a poem (of about five hundred lines) lying by us — one quite as good as new — one at all events, that we considered would answer sufficiently well for an audience of transcendentalists. *That* we gave them — it was the best that we had — for the price — and it *did* answer remarkably well. Its name was *not* "The Messenger Star" — who but Miss Walters would ever think of so delicious a little bit of invention as that? We had no name for it at all. The poem is what is occasionally called a 'juvenile poem' — but the fact is, it is anything but juvenile now, for we wrote it, printed it, and published it, in book form, before we had fairly completed our tenth year. We read it *verbatim*, from a copy now in our possession, and which we shall be happy to show at any moment to any of our inquisitive friends."[1] . . .

The audacity of this last claim to precocity of genius, which would make Poe ten years younger than he was, is almost burlesque. He goes on to say, "Over a bottle of champagne that night, we confessed to Messrs. Cushing, Whipple, Hudson, Field, and a few other natives who swear not altogether by the frog-pond — we confessed, we say, the soft impeachment of the hoax."

This was Poe's explanation, given in the course of an article, destitute of any gentlemanly trait, in reply to Miss Walters, of the "Transcript," whose name had before been the target for his

[1] The *Broadway Journal*, November 1, 1845.

shafts. One would say that piquo rather than delight was roused in him by tho success of what has been called his "mischief-making" expedition to Boston. The fact probably was, as originally stated by Griswold, that Poe had undertaken an engagement, and being unable to write a poem for such an occasion he resorted to his old compositions, and selected "Al Aaraaf" as the most available. He may have felt some doubt as to how the audience would take it, but he had none as to the excellence of his poem. His elaborate explanation of his motives was an afterthought.

Just at this time occurred tho singular transaction by which Poo became sole proprietor of tho "Journal" October 24. Mr. Bisco says that he made over his rights to Poe for tho consideration of a promissory note for $50, signed by Poe, and indorsed by Horace Greeley, who had at one time written on political topics for the paper; and when it came due Bisco collected it, as was to be anticipated, from the indorser. Greeley himself refers to this incident, with sharp pleasantry: —

"A gushing youth once wrote me to this effect:

'Dear Sir, — Among your literary treasures, you have doubtless preserved several autographs of our country's late lamented poet, Edgar A. Poe. If so, and you can spare one, please inclose it to me, and receive the thanks of yours truly.'

I promptly responded as follows: —

'Dear Sir, — Among my literary treasures, there

happens to be exactly *one* autograph of our country's late lamented poet, Edgar A. Poe. It is his note of hand for fifty dollars, with my indorsement across the back. It cost me exactly $50.75 (including protest), and you may have it for half that amount. Yours, respectfully.'

That autograph, I regret to say, remains on my hands, and is still for sale at first cost, despite the lapse of time and the depreciation of our currency." [1]

Thus Poe at last owned and edited the "Journal," but he needed capital to run it. In August he had written to Neilson Poe,[2] with whom he had reëstablished connections, that he should start a magazine in January; but this was probably only a chance reference to the "Stylus," which he was always trying to *float*. At present he devoted himself to raising further funds to pay the current bills of the paper. Among Griswold's letters, the authenticity of which cannot be fairly doubted, is one written two days after the "Journal" passed into Poe's hands. But before citing this it should be remarked that Poe and his future biographer had now become reconciled, and wore at least the show of amity until Poe's death. The occasion of their renewal of acquaintance was Griswold's "Prose Writers of America," in which Poe wished for notice. Soon after the first exchange of letters

[1] *Recollections of a Busy Life*. By Horace Greeley: pp. 196, 197.

[2] Poe to Neilson Poe, August 8, 1845. MS.

Poe sent him his poems to be edited, and at a later date he reminded him of the many times he had spoken favorably of him, and gave as the reason for the personal attack in the Philadelphia lecture the fact that some one had ascribed to Griswold the "beastly article" to which reference has already been made.

On October 26, 1845, at any rate, Poe felt sufficiently sure of Griswold's favor to make a request:

MY DEAR GRISWOLD: *Will* you aid me at a pinch — at one of the greatest pinches conceivable? If you will, I will be indebted to you for life. After a prodigious deal of manœuvering, I have succeeded in getting "The Broadway Journal" entirely within my own control. It will be a fortune to me if I can hold it — and I can do it easily with a very trifling aid from my friends. May I count you as one? Lend me $50, and you shall never have cause to regret it.

Truly yours,
EDGAR A. POE.[1]

In reply to this he apparently received twenty-five dollars at once, and as much more on the first of December; but, the lack of capital continuing to be a pressing trouble, he wrote to his cousin, George Poe, touching the same matter: —

NEW YORK, *November* 30, '45.

DEAR SIR, —

Since the period when (no doubt for good reasons) you declined aiding me with the loan of $50, I have

[1] Griswold, xxi., xxii.

perseveringly struggled against a thousand difficulties, and have succeeded, although not in making money, still in attaining a position in the world of letters, of which, under the circumstances, I have no reason to be ashamed.

For these reasons — because I feel that I have exerted myself to the utmost — and because I believe that you will appreciate my efforts to elevate the family name — I now appeal to you once more for aid.

With this letter I send you a number of "The Broadway Journal," of which, hitherto, I have been merely editor, and one third proprietor. I have lately purchased the whole paper, and, if I can retain it, it will be a fortune to me in a short time; — but I have exhausted all my resources in the purchase. In this emergency I have thought that you might not be indisposed to assist me.

I refrain from saying any more — for I feel that if your heart is kindly disposed toward me, I have already [1]

[Rest, with signature, cut off.]

While these embarrassments were annoying him, Poe used his paper for the reproduction of his works as formerly, and before the end of the year he had reprinted "Some Words with a Mummy," "The Devil in the Belfry," "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains," "Four Beasts in One," "The Oblong Box," "Mystification," "Loss of Breath," [2] and one not elsewhere published, so far as is known, "The Spectacles," an extremely weak piece of humor, which Horne had tried to get printed in Eng-

[1] Poe to George Poe, November 30, 1845. MS.
[2] Signed "Littleton Barry."

land without success. The poetry had been exhausted before this date, all of it having been put into the printer's hands in September.

The "Journal" showed vigorous management; its advertisements had been largely increased, and its circulation is said to have doubled. The last numbers of December are full of promises regarding the future; but George Poe not responding, the Greeley note becoming due, and obliging friends being now obdurate, the demise of the paper suddenly took place. On December 26 was published the following: —

VALEDICTORY.

Unexpected engagements demanding my whole attention, and the objects being fulfilled so far as regards myself personally, for which "The Broadway Journal" was established, I now, as its editor, bid farewell — as cordially to foes as to friends.

EDGAR A. POE.

What other objects Poe achieved, except the republication of nearly all the narrative prose he had ever written, and of a considerable portion of his poems, it is hard to see. One more number is said to have been issued, January 3, under the editorship of Thomas Dunn English, with which the "Journal" expired.

Just at the close of the year, apparently on November 31, Poe's collected poems had been issued by Wiley and Putnam, under the title "The Ra-

ven and Other Poems." [1] The volume contained nearly all the poetry he had ever written, and the versions are those now established in the text. In the preface he speaks in dispraise of his work, saying that he thinks nothing in this volume of much value to the public, or very creditable to himself. "Events not to be controlled," he continues, in the well-known words, "have prevented me from making at any time any serious effort in what, under happier circumstances, would have been the field of my choice. With me poetry has been not a purpose, but a passion; and the passions should be held in reverence; they must not — they cannot at will be excited, with an eye to the paltry compensations, or the more paltry commendations, of mankind." [2]

The poems which this proud apology prefaced comprise the poetic labors of their author up to the

[1] *The Raven and Other Poems.* By Edgar A. Poe. New York: Wiley and Putnam. 1845. The contents were, in order, The Raven, Valley of Unrest, Bridal Ballad, The Sleeper, The Coliseum, Lenore, Catholic Hymn, Israfel, Dream-land, Sonnet — To Zante, City in the Sea, To One in Paradise, Eulalie — A Song, To F——s S. O——d, To F——, Sonnet — Silence, The Conqueror Worm, The Haunted Palace, Scenes from "Politian." Then followed, with the foot-note still published, Poems in Youth: Sonnet — To Science, *Al Aaraaf*, *Tamerlane*, A Dream, Romance, Fairy-land, To ——, To the River ——, The Lake — To ——, Song, To Helen. It is scarcely necessary to add that the youthful poems are not printed exactly "*verbatim*, without altoration from the original edition," but the changes, nevertheless, are not important.

[2] *Works*, i. 4.

close of this year, and although a few were to be added before his death, they illustrate fully his poetic powers. In attempting an estimate of their worth, it is only just to recur once more to the theory which Poe had now completely developed regarding the aims and scope of poetry; for it is his own comment on his own text. To put it in the fewest words, Poe believed that of the pleasures that spring from Truth, which satisfies the intellect, or from Passion, which excites the heart, or from Beauty, which elevates the soul, the latter is the most pure, keen, and absorbing; and this because it appeals to that sense of harmony and feeds that yearning for its manifestation which belongs to the immortal part of man. In the moods aroused through the sentiment of beauty man is most clearly conscious of his eternal nature, and in the lifting up of his spirit under such influences penetrates (so Poe thought) to the divine. This subtle power is possessed by all beauty in its sensible forms as built by God in nature; but the suggestions of something fairer beyond and above nature, which arise in its presence, stimulate man to attempt to reach this unknown loveliness by recombining the elements he perceives, and thus in imagination (which repeats the creative act of God) to fashion by art, under the guidance of his own instinct, an ideal beauty which shall be a new and purer source of spiritual emotion. This creation of beauty is the end of all the fine arts, but in music and in poetry

it is most directly accomplished. It would, however, be an error to suppose that Poe, in thus adopting the doctrines of Coleridge and rejecting passion and truth and morality as poetic themes, meant to sever poetry by distinct boundaries from those regions of life; on the contrary, he expressly states that "the incitements of Passion, the precepts of Duty, and even the lessons of Truth" may be advantageously introduced into a poem, if they are only subordinated and blended in by the skill of the artist who understands how to use them for the heightening of the effect of more beauty; and furthermore, it should be observed that to beauty itself Poe assigns both a moral value, as lending attraction to virtue, and an intellectual value, as leading out to the mystical province of that truth which, withdrawn from the probing of the reason, is fathomed by the imagination alone. Such a speculation may be regarded as a baseless reverie or as profound philosophy; but it is essential to keep in mind the fact not only that Poe made beauty the theme of poetry, but also that he found its value in intimations of the divine; or, in other words, that he was devoted to a mystical æstheticism. Of the minor articles of his creed it is necessary to recall only those which assert that a poem should be brief; should aim at a single artistic effect, but not to the exclusion of a secondary suggested meaning; and should be touched, if possible, by a certain quaintness, grotesqueness, or peculiarity of rhythm or metre, to give it tone.

One who reflects upon the character of mind implied by the holding of this theory, the elements of which assimilated and united only very slowly in Poe's case, cannot be surprised at the objections ordinarily urged against Poe's verses. They are said to be vague, destitute of ideas, insubstantial, unreal, full of artifice, and trenching on the domain of music. That these phrases accurately describe the impression made by the poems on many minds by no means strangers to the poetic sentiment may be granted without hesitation; and if any one maintains that from certain points of view such words are justly applied, it would be futile to dissent. The diversity of criticism upon Poe's verse is largely due to the assumption that it can be measured intelligibly by any other than his own standard. The poet strives, Poe thought, to bring about in others the state felt in himself; and in his own case that was one of brooding reverie, a sort of emotional possession, full of presentiment, expectancy, and invisible suggestion, the mood that is the habitat of superstition; vagueness was the very hue in which he painted. Again, if in his prose tales he declares repeatedly that he meant not to tell a story, but to produce an effect, much more is it to be thought that in poetry he aimed not to convey an idea, but to make an impression. He was not a philosopher nor a lover; he never served truth nor knew passion; he was a dreamer, and his life was, warp and woof, mood and senti-

ment instead of act and thought. When he came to poetic expression which must needs be the genuine manifestation of the soul's secret, he had no wisdom and no romance to disclose, of any earthly reality, and he was forced to bring out his meagre store of visionary facts, to which his random and morbid feelings alone gave credibility. To say of such works that they are destitute of ideas and insubstantial is not criticism, — it is mere description. Even for that slight framework of the things of sense which Poe had to shape in order to allegorize his moods at all, he seems but little indebted to nature. The purely imaginary character of his landscape has been touched on, again and again, hitherto; it is indicative of the obvious fact that he never regarded nature as anything but the crucible of his fancies. To qualify his conceptions as unreal is merely to gather into a colorless word the quivering eastern valley, the flaming city isled in darkness, the angel-thronged, star-lighted theatre of the Worm's conquest, the wind-blown kingdom by the sea, the Titanic cypress alley, the night's Plutonian shore, or any other of these dim tracts,

"Out of space, out of time,"

where his spirit wandered. So, too, if any one presses the charge of artifice home, it must be allowed just, though it attaches only to the later poems and is the excess of art. No poet was ever less spontaneous in excellence than Poe. When one reads, at successive stages of his career, the

same old stanzas in new versions, and notices how they grew out of rudeness of many different descriptions into such perfection as they reached, he perceives before him an extraordinary example of growth in the knowledge and exercise of the poetic art, — the pulse of the machine laid bare. The changes are minute and almost immemorable, the approaches to perfection are exceedingly gradual, the last draft is sometimes only slightly related to the earliest; *but* — and *this* is the point that proves Poe primarily a careful artist rather than an inspired poet — in every instance the alteration is judicious, the step is a step forward. One who achieves success mainly by self-training in art comes to rely on art overmuch; and so he degenerates into artifice, or visible art, puts his faith in mechanism, and trusts his fame to cogs and levers of words and involutions of sounds; or it may happen, as was perhaps finally the case with Poe, that a weakened mind keeps facility with the tools when the work slips from its grasp. At least, so much truth lies in this last objection of the artificiality of Poe's work as to justify the more generous statement that he was, in verse as in prose, essentially a skillful literary artist. And furthermore, music was an essential element of his art. It is true that his ear for verbal melody was at first very defective, and was never perfect, but in much of his best work the rhythmic movement is faultless in its flow and its simplicity. This is not, however,

all that is meant by saying that he borrowed effects from music. In his verses sonorousness counts independently of its relation to the meaning of the words, and the poem seems at intervals to become merely a volume of sound, in which there is no appeal to the mind at all, but only a stimulation of the feelings as by the tones of an instrument. In the management of the theme, too, particularly in his later verse, the handling of the refrain, the recurrence to the same vocal sounds and the same order of syllabic structure, the movement of the whole poem by mere new presentations of the one idea, as in "The Raven," or of the same group of imagery, as in "Ulalume," partakes of the method of musical composition. In these ways Poe did appropriate the effects of music, and they blended with the other characteristics of his art as sound and color in nature, to make that vague impression on the mind of which he sought the secret. It belongs to his originality that he could thus exercise his mastery in the borderland between poetry and music, where none before him had had power.

After all, to meet the last circumscription of his praise, he did not write a dozen poems of the best rank. Those of his youth, already sufficiently characterized, were works of promise in a boy, but they would not have made a bubble as they sank in the waters of oblivion. Of those composed in manhood (and as such should be reckoned the present versions of "The Sleeper," "The Valley of

"The Haunted Palace," nor was that to be free from later improvements; and from its appearance until his death Poe's poems of the same level can be counted on the fingers. To the world, indeed, he is the genius of one poem only, "The Raven;" unless, to support his name, the fame of "The Bells" and of "Ulalume" be added. There is no occasion to examine either these three or any others of the dozen that are justly immortal; they all belong to the class of poems that make their way at once or not at all. Yet it may serve to define and possibly to elucidate Poe's nature if it be incidentally noticed that, except in his single lyric "Israfel," the theme of his imagination is ruin; and that in the larger number of these few best poems it is the special case of ruin which he declared the most poetic of all, — the death of a beautiful woman. It is of no concern that the treatment was radically different, so that in each instance a poem absolutely unique was created; the noteworthy fact is, at present, that Poe's genius was developed in its strength by brooding over a fixed idea, as the insane do; and when, under great excitement, some other mode of expression was imperative, it was found only in such objective work as the marvelous allegory of "The Conqueror Worm," so terrible in the very perfection of its flawless art, or in such spirit-broken confession as that other alle-







gory of "The Haunted Palace," which in intense, imaginative self-portraiture is scarcely excelled in literature. The secret life, the moments of strongest emotion, the hours of longest reach, implied by such motives as these, make that impenetrable background of shadow against which in these poems the poet stands relieved forever, — the object of deep pity, whether his sufferings were imaginary or real, inevitable or self-imposed, the work of unregarding fate or the strict retribution of justice.

But when the utmost has been said adversely, the power of these dozen poems is undiminished even over those who admit their vagueness, their lack of ideas, their insubstantial and unreal quality, their sometimes obvious artifice, their likeness to musical compositions, and their scant number. Poe would himself have considered such censures as praises in disguise, and scoffed at their authors as dull-mettled rascals, like Partridge at the play. The power, after all, remains; first and foremost a power of long-practiced art, but also of the spell itself, of the forms evoked independently of the magic that compels them, — a fascination that makes the mind pause. If one is not subdued by this, at least at moments, there are some regions of mortality unknown to him; he will never disembark on No Man's Land. If one is not sensible of the exquisite construction here shown, the poetic art is as much a mystery to him as was Prospero's to Caliban. But if one with the eye to see and the heart

to understand, being once overcome by these poems, continues to inhabit with the ill things that dwell there, he forgets Poe's own gospel of the ends of art, and perceives not the moaning of the irony that made the worshiper of beauty the poet of the outcast soul. If it be the office of poetry to intimate the divine, it must be confessed these works of Poe intimate the infernal; they are variations struck on the chord of evil that vibrates in all life, throbs of the heart of pain, echoes of ruin that float up from the deep within the deep, the legend and pæan and ritual of hopeless death; they belong to the confusions of a superstitious mind, the feebleness of an unmanned spirit, the misery of an impotent will. Profound in knowledge of the obscure sources of feeling; almost magical in the subtlety of their art; bold, clear, and novel in imagination; ideal, absolutely original, married to music of the most alluring charm, these poems fulfill all conditions of Poe's standard save one, and that the supreme one. They deserve their fame; but, seeing the gifts of genius involved in their creation, one turns from the literary result, and scans more narrowly the life in which they were involved.

At this time Poe first began to frequent, sometimes in company with his invalid wife, but more often alone, the receptions at which the *littérateurs* of the metropolis, particularly the ladies, used to meet. These gatherings took place commonly at Dr. Orville Dewey's, the eloquent preacher; or at

James Lawson's, distinguished in Poe's mind as a man interested in our literature although a Scotchman, and as an enthusiast in all matters of taste although himself devoid of it; or at Miss Anne Charlotte Lynch's, a poetess of the Willis group, whose weekly receptions in Waverley Place were thronged by literary men, artists, poetesses, and others of like pursuits. At such resorts, in the midst of a variously constituted company, Poe would sit, dressed in plain black, but with the head, the broad, retreating white brow, the large, luminous, piercing eyes, the impassive lips, that gave the visible character of genius to his features; and if the loud, bluff pleasantry of the humorist physician, Dr. Francis, or the high-keyed declamation of Margaret Fuller in her detested transcendentalist Boston dialect, would permit, he would himself, in his ordinary subdued, musical tones exercise the fascination of his talk on women of lesser note, among whom — to mention only those that come within the scope, of this narrative — were Mrs. Elizabeth Oakes-Smith, once known as the author of "The Sinless Child" (which Poe thought the most original long American poem excepting Maria del Occidente's "Bride of Seven"); Mrs. Elizabeth Frieze Ellet, whose hand Poe took in an evil hour; and Mrs. Mary Gove, afterwards Mrs. Nichols, "a Mesmerist, a Swedenborgian, a phrenologist, a homœopathist, and a disciple of Priessnitz," and, adds Poe, "what more I am not pre-

pared to say."[1] Notwithstanding his natural reserve his manners were pleasing, and his conversation, although best when but one or two were present, must have been engaging and impressive even in the constraint and inconsequence of general talk. Upon women, especially in these last years, his voice and look had a magical power, although this was probably only the extraordinary charm peculiar to the Virginia society in which he was bred; and, on his side, Poe had long indulged a habit of idealizing women and worshiping them in secret. An attachment of this sort he had formed for Mrs. Francis Sargent Osgood (a poetess of thirty and the wife of an American artist), who on publishing her first volume, seven years before, in London had been taken up as a *protégée* by Mrs. Norton. Poe had noticed her verses many times with great favor, and in his New York lecture, especially, eulogized her in warm terms. Shortly after this latter incident Willis one day handed her "The Raven," with the author's request for her judgment on it, and for an introduction to herself. She assented, and a few days later Poe called at the Astor House to see her.

"I shall never forget," she wrote, "the morning when I was summoned to the drawing-room by Mr. Willis to receive him. With his proud and beautiful head erect, his dark eyes flashing with the electric light of feeling and of thought, a peculiar, an inimitable blending of

[1] *Works*, ii. 65.

sweetness and hauteur in his expression and manner, he greeted me, calmly, gravely, almost coldly, yet with so marked an earnestnesa that I could not help being deeply impreased by it. From that momont until his death we were friends; although we met only during the first year of our acquaintance." [1]

The friendship, so signed, was sealed by some verses addressed to Poe, in the character of Israfel, by Mrs. Osgood, and published in the "Broadway Journal;" and to these Poo replied with a third version of his old stanzas, originally written for little Eliza White, and now transparently rededicated "To Mrs. F——s S——t O——d." The young poetess soon became intimate with the household in Amity Street, then the place of their settlement, and to her pen is due the only description of the family, at this time, that has been preserved: —

"It was in his own simplo yet poetical home that to me the character of Edgar Poo appeared in its most beautiful light. Playful, affectionato, witty, alternately docile and wayward as a petted child, for his young, gentle, and idolized wife, and for all who came, he had, even in the midst of his most harassing literary duties, a kind word, a pleasant smile, a graceful and courteous attention. At his desk beneath the romantic picture of his loved and lost Lenore, he would sit, hour after hour, patient, assiduous, and uncomplaining, tracing, in an exquisitely clear chirography and with almost superhuman swiftness, the lightning thoughts — the 'rare and radiant fancies' — as they flashed through his wonderful and

[1] Griswold, liii.

ever-wakeful brain. I recollect, one morning, toward the close of his residence in this city, when he seemed unusually gay and light-hearted. Virginia, his sweet wife, had written me a pressing invitation to come to them; and I, who never could resist her affectionate summons, and who enjoyed his society far more in his own home than elsewhere, hastened to Amity Street. I found him just completing his series of papers entitled 'The Literati of New York.' 'See,' said he, displaying in laughing triumph several little rolls of narrow paper (he always wrote thus for the press), 'I am going to show you by the difference of length in these the different degrees of estimation in which I hold all you literary people. In each of these one of you is rolled up and fully discussed. Come, Virginia, help me!' And one by one they unfolded them. At last they came to one which seemed interminable. Virginia laughingly ran to one corner of the room with one end, and her husband to the opposite with the other. 'And whose lengthened sweetness long drawn out is that?' said I. 'Hear her!' he cried. 'Just as if her little vain heart did n't tell her it's herself!'"[1]

Mrs. Osgood was a kind friend, and while her indulgence in sentimentality is sufficiently evident in these reminiscences, and plainly affected her more than she was conscious of, she was pleased to think, with Virginia, that her influence over Poe was for his good. If on his part there were in this Platonic friendship, as she declares, "many little poetical episodes, in which the impassioned

[1] Griswold, lii.-liii.

romance of his temperament impelled him to indulge," they were powerless to disturb the love and confidence between himself and Virginia; and on her own part, his devoted admirer obtained from him a solemn promise not to use stimulants, and, she naively states, he so far observed his word as never to appear before her when affected by them.

At Virginia's request a correspondence arose between the two, but fraught with evil consequences; for, one day, after the Poes had removed to the village of Fordham, whither they went when the cherry-trees blossomed in 1846, Mrs. Ellet, who was calling on them, saw an open letter from Mrs. Osgood to Poe, couched in language which in her judgment required friendly interference. This lady consulted with her friends, and the scandalized bevy of interlopers prevailed on Mrs. Osgood to commission some of them to demand the return of her portion of the too sugared correspondence. It seems strange that Mrs. Osgood did not herself make the request quietly, if she thought she had committed herself improperly; instead of doing so, however, she sent Margaret Fuller and a companion, who astonished the poet with their credentials. In a moment of exasperation he is said to have remarked that Mrs. Ellet had better come and look after her own letters, — a chance word that seems to have canceled all his considerate flattery of that versifier in the past ten years. The ladies returned to New York with their precious bundle; and Poe

that he gave Mrs. Ellet her own packet with-
awaiting her application, and hence was sur-
d when her brother demanded of him, a few
later, what he had no longer in his possession.
Osgood did not meet Poe after this, but her
nony to his good qualities was never lacking
casion. She wrote these reminiscences on her
-bed to defend his memory. "I have never
him," she said, "otherwise than gentle, gen-
, well bred, and fastidiously refined. To a
tive and delicately nurtured woman, there was
uliar and irresistible charm in the chivalric,
ful, and almost tender reverence with which
variably approached all women who won his
et. It was this which first commanded and
ys retained my regard for him." [1]

'hile this romance was verging to its catas-
e, Poe's literary work was the series of pa-
already mentioned, "The Literati of New
." It was published in "Godey's Lady's
," which had now become the mainstay of his
ort, although he still occasionally contributed
Graham's," which in March published an in-
nent of "Marginalia," and in April "The
osophy of Composition," with its notorious
ysis of the genesis of "The Raven."

"Godey's" he had written criticisms in each
ber since the previous November, noticing Mat-
s, Mrs. Smith, Simms, Mrs. Hewitt, Mrs.

[1] Griswold, iii.

Osgood, and Bryant; but "The Literati" was a series of papers, not called forth by current books, but a sort of "Autography" expanded, and probably made up all he had yet written of his projected work on our literature. "The Literati" proper, which began to appear in May and continued through six numbers, dealt with thirty-eight authors resident in New York, and Poe professed to give in the main not merely his own opinion of them, but that of literary society as expressed in private. The sketches themselves are distinctly the work of a magazinist, both in conception and execution; in fact, they are simply somewhat hurriedly recorded impressions of literary people and their works, interspersed, according to Poe's inveterate habit, with extracts from, or paraphrases of, his old book-reviews since the time of the "Messenger." Being written with perfect frankness, and in that spirit of oblivious indifference to what the world would say which had won a hearing for Poe's criticism, the series was the literary hit of the season. Few of these characterizations (they include personal as well as literary qualities) are in any way humiliating to their subjects. None, it is true, not even that of Mrs. Osgood, is unreservedly laudatory; but if limitations of capacity are marked out sharply and freely, praise is, as a rule, generously given within the bounds. Against Lewis Gaylord Clark, of "The Knickerbocker," Poe had an old grudge, and just at this time Briggs had succeeded

to Fay and Griswold as the peculiar object of his spleen; but with these exceptions, although some of the nobodies might have been nettled at the cavalier manner in which their merits were circumscribed or themselves patronized, there were very few with any just cause for complaint, since Poe was not so much the prince of critics as to anticipate exactly the judgment of posterity by ignoring them. In respect to the more important ones, Willis, Halleck, and Margaret Fuller, his decisions were final and have been sustained. There was a good deal of discussion, however, among the disturbed mediocrities; Godey was implored by the honey-tongued and brow-beaten by the loud-mouthed, but he refused to be intimidated by either method, as he assured the public in a card; and, in particular, Thomas Dunn English was roused to open combat.

This individual, whom Poe facetiously called "Thomas Dunn Brown," was a doctor, lawyer, novelist, editor, and poet of twenty-seven years of age, whom Poe, despite his foolish disclaimer of personal acquaintance, had met in Philadelphia, and had allowed to lounge about his office and run errands for him when he was editing the "Broadway Journal." No mortal ever held a pen who would not resent such a shameless exposure of his ears as was Poe's article in this instance, — a sort of grotesque in criticism. English secured forthwith the columns of the "Mirror" (which had

changed hands), and poured out on Poe, June 23, a flood of scurrility; besides a plentiful use of billingsgate and the easy charge of intoxication there was in particular a specific accusation of obtaining money under false pretenses and of downright forgery. Poe replied four days later in the Philadelphia "Saturday Gazette," and exercised his powers of recrimination at a length and with an effect that makes one think of the lion and the jackal. Of course he confessed his poverty and his excesses, with the pitiful extenuation that the latter were the unavoidable result rather than the cause of his misfortune; but he exculpated himself from the charges affecting his integrity, and had he not in his turn indulged in intemperate personal abuse there would have been nothing to desire in his rejoinder. Poe also brought suit against the "Mirror," and, no witnesses appearing to justify the libel, he was adjudged damages, February 17, 1847, in the sum of $225, with costs to the defendant.

Notwithstanding the wrath of a few manikins Poe's "Literati" was not a prose Dunciad; and the impression that his criticism in general was a anathema on American mediocrity is an entirely false one. Not infrequently, indeed, he exposes some fool's folly with the raillery and zest of a boy's untroubled enjoyment in the low comedy of the situation; now and then, in a more bitter mood he could with deliberate leisure pull some inse-

On the whole, however, his commendation equaled, if it did not exceed, his condemnation, and more than one of those whom he extolled to the skies has long since sunk back to the dust. The peculiarity of his position was, not that he was an unjust judge, but that he was the only one; not that his censures were undeserved, but that he alone pronounced a sentence without fear or favor. He thus drew about himself a swarm of enemies; and as his life offered only too fair an opportunity they used their advantage to take revenge in slander, as did Dr. English, but in secret. In these critical decisions of Poe's, speaking generally, he does not seem to have been himself actuated by any unworthy motive, any personal consideration of friendliness or enmity, or any hope of gain or fear of loss; if such matters affected his judgment, it was ordinarily either in an unconscious or an involuntary way. Now and then, as in the case of Griswold, he was stung into telling truth when he might otherwise have held his peace; or he apologized, as to Matthews, for the violence of some earlier critique, or lowered the key of his laudation when friendship ceased, as with Lowell. Worldly motives swayed his mind, now more, now less; personal feelings entered into his verdicts; but he was not governed by them. His open claim to impartiality, sincerity, and integ-



rity seems to be sustained; or, if shaken at all, to be invalidated by the praise he gave to his feminine friends rather than by the contempt he poured out on his masculine foes.

It is thought in some quarters that Poe's criticism, and particularly its destructive portions, was very valuable. It is even said that he raised the level of our current literature. The race of chameleon poets, however, is not yet extinct, and they feed on the green trees of Tennyson, Browning, and Swinburne as once on those of Moore, Mrs. Hemans, and Keats. Reputations are still made by the coteries of a publisher's anteroom and sustained by judicious advertising. The motives that influence the editorial judgments of the press have changed but little in a generation. If, as is true, the mediocrities of our time are more clever in their imitation and more painstaking in their drudgery, this is rather to be ascribed to the general rise of the standard of literary excellence, due to the intellectual movement of the age, than to the influence of a single free lance like Poe. The good that criticism can do to the producers of literature is trifling; its work is to improve the popular taste, and to make the best that is written widely known and easily apprehensible; to authors it is, for many reasons, well-nigh useless. Destructive criticism of imaginative work, especially, is ordinarily futile, and in Poe's case no exception need be made. The good he did was infinitesimal; it

ever, there can be no question. He was the
ple of Coleridge; and, being gifted with some-
g of Coleridge's analytic powers, he applied the
ciples he thus derived with skill and effect.
one, too, could subject himself to so long a
training, and become so perfect in his own
le art, without developing a refined taste of the
ıest value in criticism. The test of his ability
. critic, the severest test to which a man can
ut, is the quickness and certainty of his rec-
tion of unknown genius. In this Poe suc-
ed; the rank he gave to the American poets,
ıg and old (and in the case of the best of them
ad only their earliest work to judge by), is the
t sustained by the issue, and his success in
ing with the English reputations of the future
not less marked. To Tennyson, Dickens,
Longfellow he brought early applause; Mrs.
wning, Lowell, and Hawthorne were foreknown
ım when their names were still in doubt. It
o diminution of his just praise that he so far
ed in human weakness as to obey an obscure
ousy, notably in Longfellow's case; or to be
ed by a prejudice, as with Emerson or any
r transcendentalist; or to hail many a poetaster,
icularly in petticoats, as of Apollo's band. He
as extreme in eulogy as in denunciation; and,



especially in the case of Southern writers, he sometimes indulged in so laudatory a strain as to be guilty of absurdity. His decisions in more than one instance, like those on Moore, and in a less degree on Dickens, were merely contemporary; and in other cases, like that of Horne's "Orion," were esoteric and whimsical. His silence, too, regarding the great men of the past, such as Shakspere, and the unanimous report of his violent depreciation of them in conversation, must count in settling his own virtues as a critic. He was, it is easy to see now, prejudiced here and partial there; foolish, or interested, or wrong-headed; carping, or flattering, or contemptuous. Yet he was the first of his time to mark the limitations of the pioneer writers, such as Irving, Bryant, and Cooper, and to foresee the future of the younger men who have been mentioned; he was, too, though he originated no criterion, the first to take criticism from mere advertising, puffery, and friendship, and submit it to the laws of literary art. This was much to do, and in his lifetime, whatever were his deficiencies, was regarded as his great distinction; it was the more honorable because of the offense that was now and then bound to be given, even if Poe had been the wisest and kindest of men instead of the reckless, erratic, and unscholarly judge he was. For, to come to the rationale of the matter, it was by no means learning, in which he was a charlatan, nor inborn sense, nor intellectual honesty, nor moral

the qualities and methods of artistic effect, which came to him in the development of his own genius under the controlling influence of Coleridge's reason and imagination. His criticism is thus largely a series of illustrations of literary art as he himself practiced it.

For weeks before English's libel Poe had been ill at Fordham, whither he had lately removed, and henceforth his constitution may be regarded as hopelessly broken. This premature exhaustion may be in part ascribed to continuous overwork, repeated disappointments, and the humiliations of poverty; but his shattered health must also be traced to the use of liquor, his indulgence in which, since, after his year of abstinence, he broke down in 1845, had been extreme. In addition to this cause, too, must be recorded the more insidious and mortal influence of the use of opium, which, vampire-like, had sucked the vitality out of the whole frame of his being, mental, moral, and physical.

The cottage to which he had retired in the spring of 1846, although at the best a mean dwelling, was the pleasantest retreat he had known. It was a one story and a half house, still standing on King's Bridge Road, at the top of Fordham Hill. Within, on the ground-floor, were two small apartments, a kitchen and sitting-room; and above, up a narrow



stairway, two others, one — Poe's room — a low, cramped chamber, lighted by little square windows like port-holes, the other a diminutive closet of a bedroom, hardly large enough to lie down in. The furniture was of the simplest: in the clean, white-floored kitchen, says Mrs. Gove, who visited the family during this first summer, were a table, a chair, and a little stove; and in the other room, which was laid with checked matting, were only a light stand with presentation volumes of the Brownings upon it, some hanging shelves with a few other books ranged on them, and four chairs. Outside, however, the broad views, in contrast with the dwarfed interior, must have had, as is now the case, a fine spaciousness. The old cherry-trees are still rooted in the grassy turf, out of which crops here and there the granite of the underlying rock; and a stone's throw to the east of the veranda, then as now overgrown with vines, rises the ledge itself, overhung by sighing pines, and looking off far across the meadows, woods, and villages, to the glimmer of ocean on the dim horizon. Of this little home in the pleasant country there are many reminiscences, curiously intermingling the beauty of nature with the charm of the three occupants. Mrs. Clemm, now over sixty, with her large, benevolent features and white hair, in a worn black dress, made upon all who saw her an impression of dignity, refinement, and especially of deep motherly devotion to her children; Virginia, at the age

tho white pallor of her face; Poe himself, poor, proud, and ill, anticipating grief, and nursing the bitterness that springs from helplessness in tho sight of suffering borne by those dear to us, was restless and variable, the creature of contradictory impulses, alternating between tho eagerness of renewed hope and tho dull maze of the over-recurring disappointment. Friends called on him, and found him anxious over tho one great trouble of his poverty, or inspirited by the compliment of a letter from Mrs. Browning, or endeavoring to distract his mind with his pets, — a bobolink he had caught and caged, or a parrot some one had given him, or his favorite cat. If he went away to tho city, he came back at once to his home; once, when he was detained, he sent a note to Virginia, which is unique in his correspondence: —

June 12, 1846.

My Dear Heart — My Dear Virginia — Our mother will explain to you why I stay away from you this night. I trust the interview I am promised will result in some *substantial good* for me — for your dear sake and hers — keep up your heart in all hopefulness, and trust yet a little longer. On my last great disappointment I should have lost my courage *but for you* — my little darling wife. You are my *greatest* and *only* stimulus now, to battle with this uncongeniul, unsatisfactory, and ungrateful life.

I shall be with you to-morrow [illegible] P. M., and be



assured until I see you I will keep in *loving remembrance your last words*, and your fervent prayer!

Sleep well and may God grant you a peaceful summer with your devoted

EDGAR.[1]

As the summer went on Poe grew no better, and daily Virginia failed and faded, and the resources of the household were being slowly reduced to the starving point. Autumn came, the snow and the cold and the winter seclusion, and affairs grew desperate; the wolf was already at the door when by happy chance this same Mrs. Gove, whose kind heart could prompt her to something better than her verses, called on the Poes, and found the dying wife in the summer sitting-room, which had been taken for her use. The scene requires her own description: —

"There was no clothing on the bed, which was only straw, but a snow-white counterpane and sheets. The weather was cold, and the sick lady had the dreadful chills that accompany the hectic fever of consumption. She lay on the straw bed, wrapped in her husband's great-coat, with a large tortoise-shell cat in her bosom. The wonderful cat seemed conscious of her great usefulness. The coat and the cat were the sufferer's only means of warmth, except as her husband held her hands, and her mother her feet. Mrs. Clemm was passionately fond of her daughter, and her distress on account of her illness and poverty and misery was dreadful to see." [2]

[1] Ingram, ii. 88, 89.

[2] Ingram, ii. 97.

and thus had helped to make her the useful friend of the poor to whom she devoted her life. Relief was immediately sent, and by Mrs. Shew's efforts a subscription of sixty dollars was soon made up. "From the day this kind lady first saw the suffering family of the poet," adds Mrs. Gove, whose narrative is here closely followed, "she watched over them as a mother watches over her babe. She saw them often, and ministered to the comfort of the dying and the living."

Under the influence of this glimpse of kindliness, Poe roused his faculties to new work. The "Literati," which had come to an end in October, was followed in the next month in "Godey's" by a tale of Italian vengeance, in the traditional style, "The Cask of Amontillado;" but with this and an installment of "Marginalia" in the December "Graham's" his publications for this year came to an end.

In December, much to his mortification, the necessitous condition of his family was made public by a paragraph in "The Express," which appears to have been kindly meant, since it merely appealed to his friends in his behalf: —

"We regret to learn that Edgar A. Poe and his wife are both dangerously ill with the consumption, and that the hand of misfortune lies heavy upon their temporal

affairs. We are sorry to mention the fact that they are so far reduced as to be barely able to obtain the necessaries of life. This is indeed a hard lot, and we hope that the friends and admirers of Mr. Poe will come promptly to his assistance in his bitterest hour of need." [1]

Willis, who saw this notice, gave greater currency to the facts by an article in his own paper, "The Home Journal," in which he made his friend's destitution the text of a plea for an authors' house of refuge. Poe, who felt humiliated by these disclosures, wrote an open letter to Willis, December 30, 1846, in which he tried hard to deny the actual misery of his condition, but only succeeded in forcing his pen to the guarded assertion that he had indeed been in want of money in consequence of his long illness, but that it was not altogether true that he had materially suffered from privation beyond the extent of his capacity for suffering. This labored statement, however, which is given in nearly his exact words, was soon afterwards privately acknowledged, in a letter to Mrs. Locke, of Lowell, who sent him some verses, and apparently followed them with more solid expressions of her interest, to be only an indulgence of his natural pride, which impelled him, he wrote, "to shrink from public charity, even at the cost of truth in denying those necessities which were but too real." [2]

Within a month, however, all his new hopes and

[1] Griswold, xl.

[2] Griswold, xli.

had been unremitting during all these winter weeks, the following note: —

KINDEST — DEAREST FRIEND, — My poor Virginia still lives, although failing fast and now suffering much pain. May God grant her life until she sees you and thanks you once again! Her bosom is full to overflowing — like my own — with a boundless — inexpressible gratitude to you. Lest she may never see you more — she bids me say that she sends you her sweetest kiss of love and will die blessing you. But come — oh come to-morrow! Yes, I *will* be calm — everything you so nobly wish to see me. My mother sends you, also, her "warmest love and thanks." She begs me to ask you, if possible, to make arrangements at home so that you may stay with us To-morrow night. I enclose the order to the Postmaster. Heaven bless you and farewell!

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

FORDHAM, *Jan.* 29, '47.

In response, Mrs. Shew called to take a last leave of the invalid, who asked her to read some letters from the second Mrs. Allan, exculpating Poe from causing any difficulty at his old home, and gave her Poe's picture and his mother's jewel-case as keepsakes. On the next day, Saturday, January 30, Virginia died. Her husband, wrapped in the military cloak that had once served to cover her, followed the body to the tomb, to which it was consigned in the presence of a few friends.

[1] Ingram, ii. 107.

CHAPTER VII.

THE END OF THE PLAY.

Poe became very ill after this event; and although in the middle of March he seems to have partially recovered under the nursing of Mrs. Shew and his mother-in-law, he again sank, and his life was believed to be endangered. It was necessary to raise fresh funds for his relief, and by the interest of various friends one hundred dollars were collected at once, and afterwards other sums were contributed. Mrs. Shew, who, as has been said, had received a medical education, decided that Poe "in his best health had lesion of one side of the brain;" and she adds in her diary, "As he could not bear stimulants or tonics, without producing insanity, I did not feel much hope that he could be raised up from brain fever, brought on by extreme suffering of mind and body, — actual want and hunger and cold having been borne by this heroic husband in order to supply food, medicine, and comforts to his dying wife, until exhaustion and lifelessness were so near at every reaction of the fever that even sedatives had to be administered with extreme caution." [1] It was at this time that

[1] Ingram, ii. 115.

Shew to write down, of his voyage to France, his duel, and his French novel, which has been accepted as sober truth.

On recovering from this prolonged illness sufficiently to resume work in some degree, he confined himself to his home. He rose early, ate moderately, drank only water, and took abundance of exercise in the open air. From time to time he visited Mrs. Shew in the city, and she in turn called upon him, and would frequently advise him to contract marriage, with the warning that he could be saved from sudden death only by a prudent, calm life with a woman who had sufficient strength and affection to manage his affairs for him. On his part, he restrained his reply to remarks, which she termed ironical, regarding her ignorance of the world's evil. In this summer and autumn he entertained more than one acquaintance who carried away bright recollections of his home. He had still the caged birds to pet, and now in addition he amused his leisure with cultivating a flower garden, in which were beds of mignonnette, heliotrope, and dahlias. Frequently he would walk some miles to the westward, along uneven country roads lined with orchards, to the High Bridge, on whose lofty granite arches, a hundred and forty-five feet above high-water, the great aqueduct crosses Harlem River; and there on the elevated grassy causeway, used only by foot-pas-

sengers, he would pace by day or night, or would lean on the low parapet, alone, musing on his own life, or speculating on the constitution of the universe, or merely enjoying the beauty of the picturesque scenes up and down the river. The ledge, too, back of his house, with its pines and the wide prospect, was one of his haunts, and thither he would retreat to escape literary callers, or to dream out the metaphysical rhapsody over which he was brooding; for it was in such solitary places that he planned "Eureka."

This year, particularly in its earlier part, was necessarily one of comparative inactivity, yet Poe's name did not pass out of the public notice. Willis, who remained his faithful literary friend, took pains to copy his poems, advertise his plans, and commend his genius whenever opportunity offered; and Poe on his part kept him informed in regard to his doings. In the "Home Journal," March 18, appeared the lines "To M. L. S——," addressed to Mrs. Shew, of inferior poetic merit, and characterized by the peculiar and sometimes dissonant cadences of the later unrhymed poems. A week later the same paper announced as soon to be published "The Authors of America, in Prose and Verse, by Edgar A. Poe," but the work did not appear, though the review of Hawthorne in the November "Godey's," in which Poe decides that Hawthorne is not original, after all, but only peculiar, may be regarded as an extract from it. In Decem-

"Whig," and reprinted by Willis in accordance with the following request from Poe, which may serve as an example of several such letters: —

FORDHAM, *Dec.* 8.

MY DEAR MR. WILLIS, — Many thanks for the kind expressions in your note of three or four weeks ago.

I send you an "American Review" — the number just issued — in which is a ballad by myself, but published anonymously. It is called "Ulalume" — the page is turned down. I do not care to be known as its author just now; but I would take it as a great favor if you would copy it in the H. J., with a word of *inquiry* as to who wrote it: — provided always that you think the poem worth the room it would occupy in your paper — a matter about which I am by no means sure.

Always yours gratefully, EDGAR A. POE.[1]

Willis prefaced his reprint with the desired inquiry as to the authorship of "Ulalume," and described it, in words that may not have seemed to Poe indicative of sympathetic insight, as an "exquisitely piquant and skillful exercise of rarity and niceness of language," and "a curiosity in philologic flavor." Since this extraordinarily inane characterization, the best opinion has differed widely in regard to this ballad, and still most men of poetic sensibility would say no more in its favor than did Willis. It is built out of the refrain, the

[1] Poe to Willis. MS.



most difficult mode of construction, and consequently it requires in the reader not only a willingness to accept monotony as a means of expression, but a content with it; the thought moves so slowly, with such slight advances from its initial stage, with such difficult increments of meaning and indistinguishable deepening of tone, that, like the workings of an expiring mind, it only just keeps wearily in action; its allegorizing, moreover, is further from nature than is usual even with Poe, and implies by its very simplicity that long familiarity with its imagery that Poe possessed. For these and other reasons, the sympathetic mood, without which no such poem is comprehended, must be of rare occurrence in this case; but if ever that mood comes, — that physical exhaustion and mental gloom and dreaming upon the dark, in which the modes of expression in this poem are identical with those of nature, — then, in spite of jarring discords, cockney rhymes, and coarse types of mystery and horror, this poem may well seem the language of a spirit sunk in blank and moaning despair, and at every move beaten back helplessly upon itself. It was written at the period of Poe's lowest physical exhaustion and probably of most poignant self-reproach. During these months he was not far from insanity. The criticism that finds in the ballad he thus wrote merely a whimsical experiment in words has little to go on; it is more likely that, taking into consideration, too, the lack of finish in conjunc-

tion with the justness of touch in its essential structure, we have, in this poem, the most spontaneous, the most unmistakably genuine utterance of Poe, the most clearly self-portraying work of his hand. That, to most readers, it is unintelligible, and is suggestive of humor rather than of pathos, only marks how far Poe was now removed, through one and another influence, from normal humanity.

Before the publication of "Ulalume," which thus marks the extreme development of Poe's original genius, occurred the first sign that he was to be widely recognized in foreign lands, unless the theft of some of his writings by English magazines may be regarded as an indication of fame. In the "Revue des Deux Mondes," October 15, 1846, was a lengthy and appreciative review of the last edition of his tales, and attention having been already called to him in Paris by the legal proceedings between some of the city journals that had stolen, either from the original or from each other, "The Murders of the Rue Morgue," Madame Isabelle Meunier translated his best stories.

But while, unknown to himself, his reputation was thus growing in France, where it was destined to be wide-spread and enduring, he was engaged in thinking out what he thought would prove his best title to the remembrance of posterity, "Eureka." As the winter advanced he applied himself wholly to this speculation; night after night in the coldest weather he would wrap himself in his great military

cloak, and pace the little veranda of the cottage through long hours of solitary meditation, elaborating thought by thought his theory of the eternal secret. At the opening of the new year, 1848, he had practically completed the work, and he now set himself with new vigor to the old task of establishing the "Stylus," with the hope that "Eureka" would furnish him with the necessary funds. He sent out the old prospectus, with its well-worn announcements that the management was to bear the mark of individuality, the contributions to be selected solely on the ground of merit, the criticism to be independent, sincere, and fearless; all that five years had added to the advertisement was the promise of "Literary America," by the editor, being "a faithful account of the literary productions, literary people, and literary affairs of the United States," to be begun in the first number. Poe's plan was to make a personal canvass through the country, as had been so successfully done by his friend Mr. Freeman Hunt in launching his "Merchants' Magazine" a few years previous. With the view of raising the money for this journey he advertised a lecture in the Society Library, on the "Cosmogony of the Universe," and at his request Willis besought public favor for it in his paper, the "Home Journal," and added a good word for the projected "Stylus," the founding of which was said to be the ultimate object of the lecture. On February 3, in response to these

notices, about sixty persons assembled, the night unfortunately being stormy, and, it is said, were held entranced for two hours and a half by an abstract of "Eureka," although the charm must have been exercised by the personality of the poet rather than the substance of what he uttered; and indeed Poe seems to have been an eloquent and impressive speaker, as he had good right to be both by inheritance and by the natural endowments of his voice and person.

The lecture was imperfectly reported by a few of the city papers, but made no impression. Financially it had failed of its purpose, and therefore Poe, seeing no better means of obtaining funds, determined to publish the entire work, and at once offered it to Mr. Putnam, who many years afterward wrote an account[1] of the interview which, though doubtless essentially true, seems to be colored. He says that Poe was in a tremor of excitement and declared with intense earnestness and solemnity that the issue of the book was of momentous interest, that the truths disclosed in it were of more consequence than the discovery of gravitation, and that an edition of 50,000 copies would be but a beginning. Mr. Putnam confesses that he was impressed, and two days later accepted the manuscript. An edition of 500 copies was printed without delay and published early in the summer, in good form, under the title "Eureka; A Prose

[1] *Putnam's Magazine*, iv. 471. N. S. (October, 1869.)

Poem,"[1] and introduced by the well-known preface: —

"To the few who love me and whom I *love* — *to those who feel rather than to those who think* — to the dreamers and those who put faith in dreams as in the only realities — I offer this Book of Truths, not in its character of Truth-Teller, but for the Beauty that abounds in its Truth; constituting it true. To them I present the composition as an Art-Product alone: — let us say as a Romance; or, if I be not urging too lofty a claim, as a Poem.

"*What I here propound is true:* — therefore it cannot die: — or if by any means it be now trodden down so that it die, it will 'rise again to the Life Everlasting.' Nevertheless it is as a Poem only that I *wish this work* to be judged after I am dead."

It is obviously impossible to grant Poe's request. He has written a physical explanation of the universe and based it on metaphysical principles; he has declared it a true account, and he must stand by his words. Moreover, the speculative activity of Poe's mind grew out of its analytical activity; the metaphysical essays virtually begin when the ratiocinative tales end, in 1845, and thus in the history of Poe's mental development, "Eureka," the principal work of his last years, necessarily occupies an important place. The earliest indication that such topics occupied his mind occurs in the review

[1] *Eureka; A Prose Poem.* By Edgar A. Poe. New York: Geo. P. Putnam. 1848: pp. 143.

of Macaulay's Essays: "That we know no more to-day of the nature of Deity — of its purposes — and thus of man himself — than we did even a dozen years ago — is a proposition disgracefully absurd; and of this any astronomer could assure Mr. Macaulay. Indeed, to our own mind, the *only* irrefutable argument in support of the soul's immortality — or, rather, the only conclusive proof of man's alternate dissolution and rejuvenescence *ad infinitum* — is to be found in analogies deduced from the modern established theory of the nebular cosmogony."[1] Shortly after this utterance the metaphysical tales begin, but the speculations of Poe were not fully developed until the publication of "Eureka." In the following criticism, which necessarily partakes somewhat of the abstract nature of its subject, only what is peculiar to Poe will be dwelt on; and it may as well be premised that the end in view is not the determination of abstract truth, but simply the illustration alike of Poe's genius and character by the light of his speculations.

Poe's hypothesis is as follows: The mind knows intuitively — by inductive or deductive processes which escape consciousness, elude reason, or defy expression — that the creative act of Deity must have been the simplest possible; or, to expand and define this statement, it must have consisted in willing into being a primordial particle, the germ of all things, existing without relations to aught, or,

[1] *Works*, ii. 447.

in the technical phrase, unconditioned. This particle, by virtue of the divine volition, radiated into space uniformly in all directions a shower of atoms of diverse form, irregularly arranged among themselves, but all, generally speaking, equally distant from their source; this operation was repeated at intervals, but with decreased energy in each new instance, so that the atoms were impelled less far. On the exhaustion of the radiating force, the universe was thus made up of a series of concentric hollow spheres, like a nest of boxes, the crusts of the several spheres being constituted of the atoms of the several discharges. The radiating force at each of its manifestations is measured by the number of atoms then thrown off; or, since the number of atoms in any particular case must have been directly proportional with the surface of the particular sphere they occupied, and since the surfaces of a series of concentric spheres are directly proportional with the squares of their distances from the centre, the radiating force in the several discharges was directly proportional with the squares of the distances to which the several atomic showers were driven.

On the consummation of this secondary creative act, as the diffusion may be called, there occurred, says Poe, a recoil, a striving of the atoms each to each in order to regain their primitive condition; and this tendency, which is now being satisfied, is expressed in gravitation, the mutual

attraction of atoms with a force inversely proportional with the squares of the distances. In other words, the law of gravitation is found to be the converse of the law of radiation, as would be the case if the former energy were the reaction of the latter as is claimed; furthermore, the distribution of the atoms in space is seen to be such as would result from the mode of diffusion described. The return of the atoms into their source, however, would take place too rapidly, adds Poe, and without accomplishing the Deity's design of developing out of the original homogeneous particle the utmost heterogeneity, were it not that God, in this case a true *Deus ex machina*, has interposed by introducing a repelling force which began to be generated at the very inception of the universal reaction, and ever becomes greater as the latter proceeds. Poe names this force electricity, while at the same time he suggests that light, heat, and magnetism are among its phases, and ascribes to it all vital and mental phenomena; but of the principle itself he makes a mystery, since he is intuitively convinced that it belongs to that spiritual essence which lies beyond the limits of human inquiry. In the grand reaction, then, the universe is through attraction becoming more condensed, and through repulsion more heterogeneous. Attraction and repulsion taken together constitute our notion of matter; the former is the physical element, the Body, the latter is the spiritual element, the Soul. Incidentally it should

be remarked that since in a divine design, being perfect, no one part exists for the sake of others more than the others for its sake, it is indifferent whether repulsion be considered, as hitherto, an expedient to retard the attractive force, or, on the other hand, the attractive force as an expedient to develop repulsion; in other words, it is indifferent whether the physical be regarded as subordinate to the spiritual element, or *vice versa*. To return to the main thread, Poe affirms that repulsion will not increase indefinitely as the condensation of the mass proceeds, but when in the process of time it has fulfilled its purpose — the evolution of heterogeneity — it will cease, and the attractive force, being unresisted, will draw the atoms back into the primordial particle in which, as it has no parts, attraction will also cease; now, attraction and repulsion constituting our notion of matter, the cessation of these two forces is the same thing with the annihilation of matter, or in other words, the universe, at the end of the reaction which has been mentally followed out, will sink into the nihility out of which it arose. In conclusion Poe makes one last affirmation, to wit, that the diffusion and ingathering of the universe is the diffusion and ingathering of Deity itself, which has no existence apart from the constitution of things.

It is difficult to treat this hypothesis, taken as a metaphysical speculation, with respect. To examine it for the purpose of demolition would be a tedious,

though an easy task; but fortunately there is no need to do more than point out a few of its confusions in order to illustrate the worthlessness of Poe's thought in this field, and to indicate the depth of the delusion under which he labored in believing himself a discoverer of new truth. For this purpose it will be best to take the most rudimentary metaphysical ideas involved. The primordial particle is declared to be unconditioned — "my particle proper is absolute Irrelation," — or in other words it is the Absolute; but this is incompatible with its being willed into being by Deity, to which it would then necessarily stand related as an effect to its cause; on the contrary, it must itself, being the Absolute, be Deity with which Poe at last identifies it. In other words, when Poe has reached the conception of the primordial particle as first defined by him, he is just where he started, that is, at the conception of Deity, and at that point, as has been seen, he had to end. The difficulty which bars inquiry — the inconceivability of creation — remains as insuperable as ever, although Poe may have cheated himself into believing it overcome by the legerdemain of a phrase from physics; in the attempt to describe the generation of the phenomenal universe out of the unknowable, he has been foiled by the old obstacles — the impossibility of making an equation between nothing and something, of effecting a transformation of the absolute into the conditioned. If the primordial particle be material, it is only

the scientific equivalent of the old turtle of the Hindoos, on which the elephant stands to support the globe; if it be immaterial, it is the void beneath.

Such a criticism as the above belongs to the primer of thought in this science; but objections as obvious, brief, and fatal may be urged against every main point of the argument. Without entering on such a discussion it is sufficient to observe, as characteristic illustrations of the density of Poe's ignorance in this department of knowledge, that he regards space not as created but as given, explains the condensation of the universe as being a physical reaction upon the immaterial will of God (for the original radiating force cannot be discriminated from and is expressly identified with the divine volition, just as the primordial particle cannot be discriminated from and is expressly identified with the divine essence), and lastly so confuses such simple notions as final and efficient causes that he contradistinguishes the force of repulsion from that of attraction as arising and disappearing in obedience to the former instead of the later sort. In a word, Poe's theory belongs to the infancy of speculation, to the period before physics was separated from ontology; in this sense, and in no other, Kennedy's remark that Poe wrote like "an old Greek philosopher," was just.

What Poe himself most prized in this hypothesis was its pantheistic portion. The sentence of Baron Bielfeld, — "nous ne connaissons rien de

made a deep impression on his mind early in life; it is one of the half-dozen French quotations that he introduces at every opportunity into his compositions; in "Eureka" he translates it, "We know absolutely *nothing* of the nature or essence of God; in order to comprehend what he is, we should have to be God ourselves," — and he immediately adds, "I nevertheless venture to demand if this our present ignorance of the Deity is an ignorance to which the soul is *everlastingly* condemned."[1] Now after reflection he boldly took the only road to such knowledge that was left open by the apothegm, and affirmed that he was God, being persuaded thereto by his memories of an ante-natal and his aspiration for an immortal existence, and in particular by his pride. "My whole nature utterly *revolts*," he exclaimed, "at the idea that there is any Being in the Universe superior to *myself!*"[2] On reading so violent an expression of belief one involuntarily examines the matter more closely and pushes home the question whether Poe did actually so feel himself to the top of his bent; and after some little investigation one finds that, if he was his own dupe, the reason is not far to seek. It is necessary here to summarize the speculations which were put forth elsewhere by Poe, especially in the metaphysical tales, and either led up to or supplemented the views of "Eureka."

[1] *Works*, i. 132.

[2] Ingram, ii. 144.



According to these other statements, the Universe is made up of gross matter sensibly perceived and of fine matter so minutely divided that the atoms coalesce (this is, of course, a contradiction in terms) and form an unparticled substance which permeates and impels all things. This unparticled substance or imperceptible coalescent matter is the universal mind (into such unintelligible phraseology is the keen analyst forced); its being is Deity; its motion, regarded on the material or energetic side, is the divine volition, or, regarded on the mental or conscious side, is the creative thought. Deity and its activity, being such in its universal existence, is individualized, by means of gross matter made for that end, into particular creatures, among which are men; the human being, in other words, is a specialization of the universal, or is God incarnate, as is every other creature whatsoever. It is superfluous to follow Poe in his fantastic conception of the universe as the abode of countless rudimentary incarnations of the Deity, each a divine thought and therefore irrevocable; the peculiar form of his pantheism would not be more defined thereby. At the first glance one sees that his theory is built out of Cartesian notions, crudely apprehended, and rendered ridiculous by the effort to yoke them with thoroughly materialistic ideas. In fact, Poe's scraps of speculative philosophy came from such opposite quarters that when his mind began to work on such contradictory information

he could not well help falling into inextricable confusion. On the one hand he had derived, early in life, from obscure disciples of the French *philosophes*, the first truth that a materialist ever learns, — the origin of all knowledge in experience, and the consequent limitation of the mind to phenomena; on the other hand he had at a later period gleaned some of the conceptions of transcendentalism from Coleridge, Schlegel, and other secondary sources; from the union of such principles the issue was naturally monstrous, two-natured, like the Centaur. Essentially Poe was a materialist; whether, by gradually refining and subdividing matter, he reaches the unparticled substance, or by reversing the evolution of nature he arrives at the fiery mist and the primordial particle, he seeks to find out God by searching matter; and even in adopting the radically spiritual idea of pantheism, he is continually endeavoring to give it a materialistic form. He persuaded himself, as it is easy for ignorance to do; subtle as his mind was, well furnished for metaphysical thought both by his powers of abstraction and of reasoning, he wrote the jargon that belongs to the babbling days of philosophy because he did not take the pains to know the results of past inquiry and to train himself in modern methods. By his quick perception and adroit use of analogies, and especially by his tireless imagination, he gave his confused dogmatism the semblance of a reasoned system; but in fact his metaphysics

exhibit only the shallowness of his scholarship and the degrading self-delusion of an arrogant and fatuous mind.

It is probable that few readers of "Eureka" ever seriously tried to understand its metaphysics. Its power — other than the fascination which some readers feel in whatever makes of their countenances "a foolish face of wonder" — lies in its exposition of Laplace's nebular theory and its vivid and popular presentation of astronomical phenomena. In this physical portion of the essay it has been fancied that Poe anticipated some of the results of later science; but this view cannot be sustained with candor. His own position that matter came from nihility and consisted of centres of force had been put forth as a scientific theory by Boscovich in 1758–59, had been widely discussed, and had found its way into American text-books. The same theory in a modified form had just been revived and brought to the notice of scientists by Faraday in his lecture in 1844. It has not, however, occupied the attention of first-class scientific men since that time. There may be, in the claim that "the recent progress of scientific thought runs in Poe's lines," some reference to Sir William Thomson's vortex theory of the constitution of atoms, but its resemblance to Poe's theory of vortices is only superficial, for what he puts forth was merely a revival of one of the earliest attempts to explain the Newtonian law, long since abandoned

has now been followed out in detail; these suggestions, however, were not at the time peculiar *to* Poe, were not originated or developed by him, but on the contrary were common scientific property, for he appropriated ideas, just as he paraphrased statements of fact, from the books he read. He was no more a forerunner of Spencer, Faraday, and Darwin than scores of others, and he did nothing to make their investigations easier.

Poe's purely scientific speculations are mainly contained in the unpublished *addenda* to a report of his lecture on "The Universe" sent to a correspondent, and consist either of mathematical explanations of Kepler's first and third laws; or of statements, "that the sun was condensed at once (not gradually according to the supposition of Laplace) into his smallest size," and afterwards "sent into space his substance in the form of a vapor" from which Neptune was *made*; or of similar theories. They exhibit once more Poe's tenacity of mind, the sleuth-hound persistence of his intellectual pursuit; but, like his metaphysics, they represent a waste of power. They are, moreover, characterized by extraordinary errors. Some of the data are quite imaginary, it being impossible to determine what are the facts; some of them are quite wrong. The density of Jupiter, for example, in a long and im-



portant calculation, is constantly reckoned as two and one half, whereas it is only something more than one fifth, and the densities of the planets are described as being inversely as their rotary periods, whereas in any table of the elements of the solar system some wide departures from this rule are observable. Again, it is stated that Kepler's first and third laws "cannot be explained upon the principle of Newton's theory;" but, in fact, they follow by mathematical deduction from it. Poe's own explanation of them is merely a play upon figures. A striking instance of fundamental ignorance of astronomical science is his statement at various places that the planets rotate (on their own axes) in elliptical orbits, and the reference he frequently makes to the *breadth* of their orbits (the breadth of their paths through space) agreeably to this supposition. Such a theory is incompatible with the Newtonian law of gravitation, according to which any revolution in an elliptical orbit implies a source of attraction at the focus of the ellipse. Examples of bodies which have breadth of orbit in Poe's sense are found in the satellites of all the planets, each of which, however, has its primary as a source of attraction to keep it in its elliptical orbit; the primary by its revolution round the sun gives then the satellite a breadth of orbit. But to make the proper rotation of the planets themselves take place about a focus, which would be merely a point moving in an elliptical orbit about the sun,

would be to give them an arbitrary motion with no force to produce it.

So far was Poe from being a seer of science, that he was fundamentally in error with regard to the generalizations which were of primo importance to his speculations. The one grand assumption of his whole speculation is the universality of the law of inverse squares as applied to attraction and repulsion, whereas it has been known since the beginning of study regarding them that that law does not explain all the forces involved, as, for example, molecular forces; and for this Boscovich himself had provided. Again, to illustrate his scientific foresight, he reproaches Herschel for his reluctance to doubt the stability of the universe, and himself boldly affirms, consistently with his theory, that it is in a state of ever swifter collapse; than this nothing could be more at variance with the great law of the conservation of energy. Undoubtedly Poe had talents for scientific investigation, had he been willing to devote himself to such work; but, so far as appears from this essay, he had not advanced farther in science that the elements of physics, mathematics, and astronomy, as he had learned them at school or from popular works, such as Dr. Nichol's "Architecture of the Heavens," or from generalizations, such as the less technical chapters of Auguste Comte's "La Philosophie Positif." Out of such a limited stock of knowledge Poe could not by mere re-

flection generate any Newtonian truth; that he thought he had done so, measures his folly. In a word, for this criticism must be brought to a close, "Eureka" affords one of the most striking instances in literature of a naturally strong intellect tempted by overweening pride to an Icarian flight and betrayed, notwithstanding its merely specious knowledge, into an ignoble exposure of its own presumption and ignorance. The facts are not to be obscured by the smooth profession of Poe that he wished this work to be looked on only as a poem; for, though he perceived that his argument was too fragmentary and involved to receive credence, he was himself profoundly convinced that he had revealed the secret of eternity. Nor, were "Eureka" to be judged as a poem, that is to say, as a fictitious cosmogony, would the decision be more favorable; even then so far as it is obscure to the reader it must be pronounced defective, so far as it is understood, involving as it does in its primary conceptions incessant contradictions of the necessary laws of thought, it must be pronounced meaningless. Poe believed himself to be that extinct being, a universal genius of the highest order; and he wrote this essay to prove his powers in philosophy and in science. To the correspondent to whom he sent the *addenda* he declared, "As to the lecture, I am very quiet about it — but if you have ever dealt with such topics, you will recognize the novelty and *moment* of my views. What I have propounded

will (in good time) revolutionize the world of Physical and Metaphysical science. I say this calmly, but I say it."[1] Poe succeeded only in showing how egregiously genius may mistake its realm.

Besides "Eureka," Poe's publications for the first half year were of the slightest, consisting only of "Marginalia," in January and February, and "Fifty Suggestions," in May and June (a paper of the same character), in "Graham's," and "An Enigma," an anagrammatic poem to Sarah Ann Lewis, commonly called "Estelle," in the "Union," in March.

A glimpse of his life at home is afforded by an affectionate reminiscence of Mrs. Clemm's, which was reported by Mr. R. E. Shapley, of Philadelphia, in a newspaper, and has by chance been preserved; in the main parts it seems to apply to the whole period of his widowerhood: —

"He never liked to be alone, and I used to sit up with him, often until four o'clock in the morning, he at his desk, writing, and I dozing in my chair. When he was composing 'Eureka,' we used to walk up and down the garden, his arm around me, mine around him, until I was so tired I could not walk. He would stop every few minutes and explain his ideas to me, and ask if I understood him. I always sat up with him when he was writing, and gave him a cup of hot coffee every hour or two. At home he was simple and affectionate as a

[1] *Poe to* ——. *Ingram, ii.* 141.

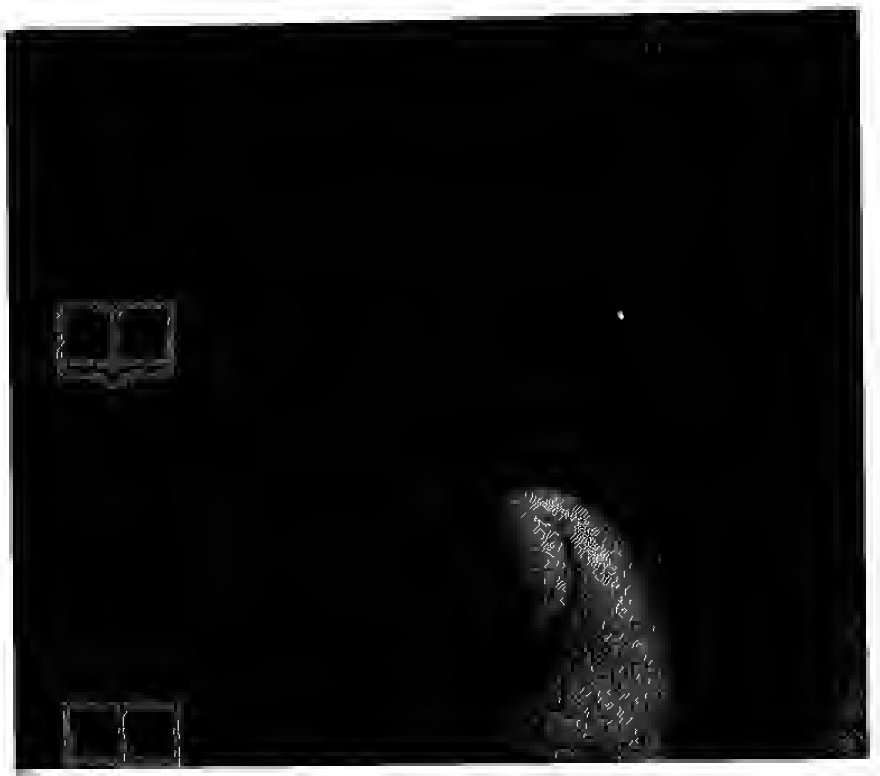
child, and during all the years he lived with me I do not remember a single night that he failed to come and kiss his 'mother,' as he called me, before going to bed."

The principal event of his private life, when "Eureka" was being published, was the termination of his social intercourse with Mrs. Shew. Since the death of Virginia, this lady had maintained her intimacy with the family, and had actively befriended him in his literary projects. In the earlier part of the year she had asked him to furnish the music room and library of a new house which she was to occupy, and she made him at home when he visited her. One such visit is especially of interest, since to it has been ascribed the first suggestion of Poe's second great popular poem, "The Bells." It was early in the summer that he one day called and complained that he had to write a poem, but felt no inspiration. Mrs. Shew persuaded him to drink some tea in a conservatory whose open windows admitted the sound of church-bells, and gave him some paper, which he declined, saying, "I so dislike the noise of bells to-night, I cannot write. I have no subject — I am exhausted." Mrs. Shew then wrote, "The Bells, by E. A. Poe," and added, "The bells, the little silver bells;" on the poet's finishing the stanza thus suggested, she again wrote, "The heavy iron bells," and this idea also Poe elaborated, and then copying off the two stanzas, headed it, "By Mrs. M. L. Shew," and called it her poem.

But although the incident is related, it may be questioned whether this was the original genesis of the poem. It will be remembered that Poe derived several suggestions from Châteaubriand at the very beginning of his career. The parallelism that exists between the completed poem of "The Bells" and a brief chapter of the "Génie du Christianisme" is at least worth noticing, and it is not likely to be a fortuitous coincidence. The following extract will sufficiently illustrate the matter.

"Il nous semble que si nous étions poëte, nous ne dédaignerions point cette cloche *agitée par les fantômes* dans la vieille chapelle de la forêt, ni celle qu'une religieuse frayeur balançoit dans nos campagnes pour écarter le tonnerre, ni celle qu'on sonnoit la nuit, dans certains ports de mer, pour diriger le pilote à travers les écueils. Les carillons des cloches, au milieu de nos fêtes, sembloient augmenter l'allégresse publique; dans des calamités, au contraire, ces mêmes bruits devenoient terribles. Les cheveux dressent encore sur la tête au souvenir de ces jours de meurtre et de feu, retentissant des clameurs du tocsin. Qui de nous a perdu la mémoire de ces hurlements, de ces cris aigus, entrecoupés de silences, durant lesquels on distinguoit de rares coups de fusil, quelque voix lamentable et solitaire, et surtout le bourdonnement de la cloche d'alarme, ou le son de l'horologe qui frappoit tranquillement l'heure écoulée?" [1]

1 *Génie du Christianisme.* Par M. le Vicomte de Châteaubriand. Paris, P. Pourrat Frères, 1836: tome ii., 261.



In view of Poe's known habits of composition, it is most likely that this poetic suggestion in a work to which he was in early years under considerable obligations, was one of the ideas that haunted him for years, and this is sustained by his frequent reference to the magical sounds of bells throughout his literary life. It may well be that this is the poem referred to in Griswold's memoir as the subject on which he meant to write for the Boston Lyceum — "a subject which he said had haunted his imagination for years." [1] If there be any plausibility in this inference, the likelihood is that Mrs. Shew, who pleads guilty to Poe's reproach that she never read his tales or poems, merely recalled to him thoughts and words which she already knew had been running in his mind.

The events immediately subsequent to this incident also deserve mention. Word was sent to Mrs. Clemm that Poe would remain in the city, and, going to his room, he slept twelve hours, after which he only faintly remembered what he had done. "This showed," says the diary, "that his mind was injured, nearly gone out for want of food and from disappointment. He had not been drinking, and had only been a few hours from home. Evidently his vitality was low and he was nearly insane. While he slept we studied his pulse, and found the same symptoms which I had so often noticed before. I called in Dr. Francis (the old man

[1] Griswold, xxxviii.

was taken home by his friend, but did not seem to understand that he was ill.

It must have been very soon after this that Mrs. Shew, finding that her *protégé* was too irresponsible and too romantic to be allowed such freedom with her as he had been accustomed to, broke off the acquaintance. Poe, who was never very sensible of the social realities of life, seems in these last years to have been unable to observe the limits set by the world to even the most genuine and pure devotion in such a case. The consequence which, although he had foreseen it, must, in his state of health, have been hard to endure, was the sudden and complete cessation of intercourse between the families. In June Mrs. Shew wrote an explanatory letter to him, and he replied as follows, but they never afterwards met on the old terms: —

"Can it be true, Louise, that you have the idea fixed in your mind to desert your unhappy and unfortunate friend and patient? You did not say so, I know, but for months I have known you were deserting me, not willingly, but none the less surely — my destiny —

'Disaster, following fast and following faster, till his song one burden bore —
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore —
Of "Never — nevermore."'

[1] Ingram, ii. 156.

So I have had premonitions of this for months. I repent, my good spirit, my loyal heart! must this follow as a sequel to all the benefits and blessings you have so generously bestowed? Are you to vanish like all I love, or desire, from my darkened and 'lost soul'? I have read over your letter again and again, and cannot make it possible, with any degree of certainty, that you wrote it in your right mind. (*I know you did not without tears of anguish and regret.*) Is it possible your influence is lost to me? Such tender and true natures are ever loyal until death; but you are not dead, you are full of life and beauty! Louise, you came in, . . . in your floating white robe—'Good morning. Edgar.' There was a touch of conventional coldness in your hurried manner, and your attitude as you opened the kitchen door to find Muddie, is *my last remembrance of you.* There was love, hope, and *sorrow* in your smile, instead of love, hope, and *courage*, as ever before. O Louise, how many sorrows are before you! Your ingenuous and sympathetic nature will be constantly wounded in its contact with the hollow, heartless world; and for me, alas! unless some true and tender, and pure womanly love saves me, I shall hardly last a year longer alive! A few short months will tell how far my strength (physical and moral) will carry me in life here. How can I believe in Providence when *you* look coldly upon me? Was it not you who renewed my hopes and faith in God? . . . and in humanity? Louise, I heard your voice as you passed out of my sight leaving me . . .; but I still listened to your voice. I heard you say with a sob, 'Dear Muddie.' I heard you greet *my Catarina*, but it was only as a memory . . . nothing escaped *my ear*,

to my mother, and I heard her reply, 'Yes, Loui . . . yes.' . . . Why turn your soul from its true work for the desolate to the thankless and miserly world? . . . I felt my heart stop, and I was sure I was then to die before your eyes. Louise, it is well — it is fortunate — you looked up with a tear in your dear eyes, and raised the window, and talked of the guava you had brought for my sore throat. Your instincts are better than a *strong man's reason for me* — I trust they may be for *yourself*. Louise, I feel I shall not prevail — a shadow has already fallen upon your soul, and is reflected in your eyes. It is *too late* — you are floating away with the cruel tide . . . it is not a common trial — it is a fearful one to me. Such rare souls as yours so beautify this earth! so relieve it of all that is repulsive and sordid. So brighten its toils and cares, it is hard to lose sight of them even for a short time . . . but you must know and *be assured* of my regret and sorrow if aught I have ever written has hurt you. *My heart never wronged you.* I place you in *my esteem* — in *all solemnity* — beside the friend of my boyhood — the mother of my school-fellow, of whom I told you, and as I have repeated in the poem . . . as the truest, tenderest of this world's most womanly souls, and an angel to my forlorn and darkened nature. I will not say 'lost soul' again, for your sake. I will try to overcome my grief for the sake of your unselfish care of me in the past, and in life or death, I am ever yours gratefully and devotedly,

"Edgar A. Poe." [1]

[1] Ingram, ii. 157–159.

Poe was not to remain long in this forlorn condition. He had indulged for some years one of his silent ideal adorations for Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, a poetess of Providence, Rhode Island, to whom he had been attracted by a verbal description of her eccentricities and sorrows. Of this ideal passion no words except his own can convey an adequate idea, although it must be premised that the following passages were not written until after he had met the lady.

"She [his informant] had referred to thoughts, sentiments, traits, *moods*, which I knew to be my own, but which, until that moment, I had believed to be my own solely — unshared by any human being. A profound sympathy took immediate possession of my soul. I cannot better explain to you what I felt than by saying that your unknown heart seemed to pass into my bosom — there to dwell forever — while mine, I thought, was translated into your own. From that hour I loved you. Since that period I have never seen nor heard your name without a shiver, half of delight, half of anxiety. — The impression left upon my mind was that you were still a wife, and it is only within the last few months that I have been undeceived in this respect. For this reason I shunned your presence and even the city in which you lived. You may remember that once when I passed through Providence with Mrs. Osgood I positively refused to accompany her to your house, and even provoked her into a quarrel by the obstinacy and seeming unreasonableness of my refusal. I dared neither go nor say why I could not. I dared not speak of you —

all that was uttered in my presence respecting you. The merest whisper that concerned you awoke in me a shuddering sixth sense, vaguely compounded of fear, ecstatic happiness, and a wild inexplicable sentiment that resembled nothing so nearly as a consciousness of guilt." [1]

Mrs. Whitman, on her part, had been informed of frequent commendatory allusions to herself made by Poe, and was prevailed upon to address some verses to him for the entertainment of what was termed a valentine party given by some literary friends in New York. The two did not meet on this occasion; but the verses, published in the "Home Journal," March 18 (now entitled "The Raven," in Mrs. Whitman's "Poems") were sent to Poe. He says, in the continuation of the letter just quoted, that he was thrown into a state of ecstasy by this proof of her regard, and, as he could not express his emotion in spontaneous lines, took down a volume of his old poems and read "To Helen," with the result that the identity of name and the aptness of the sentiment, which to one accustomed to the Calculus of Probabilities wore an air of positive miracle, overwhelmed him with the belief that their destinies were conjoined. He was, at least, aroused to the point of composition, and replied to her valentine with the lines "To ——," afterwards elaborated into the beautiful, if not impassioned poem "To Helen," which is supposed to

[1] Poe to Mrs. Whitman, no date. Ingram, ii. 161, 162.

commemorate his first sight of this lady when, on his way back from his first visit to Boston, in the summer of 1845, he had observed her among the roses of her garden in the moonlight. Whether this legend be true or not — and there is no reason to doubt it — the scene of the lines is clearly a mere elaboration of that suggested in the seventh stanza of Mrs. Whitman's "The Raven," in connection with the vista obviously repeated from his lines of the previous year to Mrs. Shew. This poem was afterwards printed in the "Union Magazine" for November; but as at this time it drew no acknowledgment from its object, to whom, although he had not as yet been introduced, he sent a written copy still without his name, he soon after, June 10, applied to his visitor of the previous autumn, Miss Anna Blackwell, who was then at Providence, and begged her to write him something about Mrs. Whitman, and added "*keep my secret* — that is to say, let no one know I have asked you to do so."[1] This lady did not answer his note; on the contrary, hearing Miss Maria McIntosh, another literary woman, tell Mrs. Whitman that one evening at Fordham a month previously Poe had talked only of her, Miss Blackwell gave the letter at once to Mrs. Whitman herself, who continued to observe an obstinate silence towards her admirer.[2]

[1] Ingram, ii. 165.

[2] Cf. Mrs. Whitman to R. H. Stoddard, September 30, 1872. Stoddard, cxxxiv.-cxxxix.

Locke, and lectured on "The Poetic Principle." There he made acquaintance with a family who became his devoted friends. Immediately upon his return to New York, being furnished with funds for his long-delayed journey in behalf of the "Stylus," derived possibly from this lecture or the two advances made on "Eureka," he started for Richmond. In that city he made the acquaintance of Mr. John R. Thompson, editor of the "Southern Literary Messenger," of whose office he made a resort, and among his old friends he met his boyish flame, Miss Royster, now the widow Shelton, well supplied with worldly goods and well disposed toward himself. He was on the point of taking up the youthful romance and proposing marriage to her, when he received from Mrs. Whitman, who had begun to question the propriety of her neglect, two stanzas of her poem, "A Night in August," unsigned, and sent, she says, after a lapse of more than two months, in "playful acknowledgment" of his own anonymous lines. In the letter already quoted, Poe represents his state of mind during her silence as a hoping against hope culminating in a spirit far more reckless than despair; and he concludes, referring to his intention of offering his hand to Mrs. Shelton at this stage, "your lines reached me in Richmond on the very day in which I was about to enter on a course which would have

borne *me* far, far away, from *you*, sweet, sweet Helen, and from the divine dream of your love." He left with Mr. Thompson for publication in "The Messenger," a criticism of Mrs. Lewis's poems, printed in the September number, and "The Rationale of Verse," printed in the October and November numbers, and immediately returned to Fordham. There he found time to write an open letter, September 20, to Mr. C. F. Hoffman, of "The Literary World," in reply to a criticism on "Eureka" which had appeared during his absence, and in which he observes that the ground covered by Laplace compares with that covered by his own theory as a bubble with the ocean on which it floats; and, on the next day, if Mrs. Whitman's date be correct, having obtained a letter of introduction from Miss McIntosh, he presented himself to his poetical correspondent, passed two evenings in her company, and with a characteristic choice of place, asked her, as they were walking in the cemetery, to marry him. Mrs. Whitman, who had delayed her reply, wrote to him a letter in which, as may be gathered from Poe's indignant protest against confounding so spiritual a love as his with merely mortal matters, she referred to her age — she was forty-five and had been widowed for the past fifteen years — her personal appearance, and her illness; but such objections could not withstand the high style of Poe's vein, and she was forced to acknowledge, though rather by suggestion than con-

character. To this he replied, October 18,
a protestation that "with the exception of oc-
nal follies and excesses which I bitterly lament
o which I have been driven by intolerable sor-
and which are hourly committed by others
out attracting any notice whatever — I can
to mind no act of my life which would bring a
h to my cheek — or to yours." [1] He reminded
of the enemies he had made by his published
cisms, of the result of his libel case, and of her
nce from his friends, and concluded with a
ch of the secluded Eden he had fancied for
abode (out of "Landor's Cottage" which he
then writing), and expressions of his sorrow
his dream was not to be realized, of his deep
tion to herself, his utter hopelessness and the
ıy of his determination to abandon his fruitless
ing.

oon after dispatching this letter, however, being
ıis way to Lowell to deliver a new lecture, he
ped at Providence, and, calling upon Mrs.
itman, he again urged her to accept his hand
realize the last and brightest hope that re-
ned to him in life. She promised still to enter-
his proposal, and to write to him at Lowell
decision at which she should arrive. Thither
went, and though he did not deliver his lecture,

[1] Ingram, ii. 171.

cemented his acquaintance with his new friends and spent some days at the village of Westford, where he rested, waited, strolled off 'to look at the hills,' and enjoyed the society of "Annie," whom he had taken into his confidence, and of her sister. The latter, who was then a school-girl, in her reminiscences of Poe, draws the familiar portrait of him, self-possessed, serious, deferential to all women, distinguished by the large, deep eyes and low baritone voice that charmed so many of them; but she adds nothing of novel interest except a quiet indoor scene, curiously illustrative of the speed with which he established a habit of intimacy with married women.

"My memory photographs him, sitting before an open wood fire, in the early autumn evening, gazing intently into the glowing coal, holding the hand of a dear friend — 'Annie' — while for a long time no one spoke, and the only sound was the ticking of the tall old clock in the corner of the room." [1]

About the second of November, having received an indecisive letter from Mrs. Whitman, who seems to have been always struggling between her inclination and her prudence, and having replied that he would call at her house on Saturday, November 4, he left this pleasant home.

Two weeks later he wrote to his friend at Lowell, referring to what happened after he bade her farewell, as follows: —

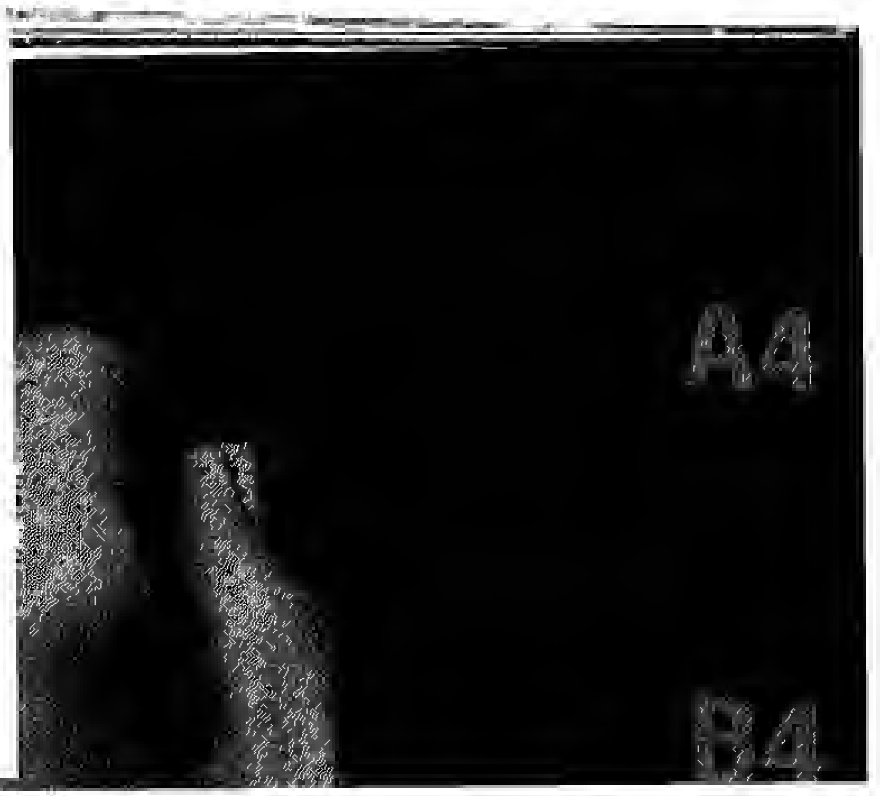
[1] Ingram, ii. 190.

"I remember nothing distinctly from that moment until I found myself in Providence. I went to bed and wept through a long, long, hideous night of Despair — When the day broke, I arose and endeavored to quiet my mind by a rapid walk in the cold, keen air — but all *would* not do — the Demon tormented me still. Finally, I procured two ounces of laudanum, and without returning to my hotel, took the cars back to Boston. When I arrived I wrote you a letter, in which I opened my whole heart to you — to *you*. . . . I told you how my struggles were more than I could bear. . . . I then reminded you of that holy promise which was the last I exacted from you in parting — the promise that, under all circumstances, you would come to me on my bed of death. I implored you to come *then*, mentioning the place where I should be found in Boston. Having written this letter, I swallowed about half the laudanum, and hurried to the Post Office, intending not to take the rest until I saw you — for, I did not doubt for one moment, that Annie would keep her sacred promise. But I had not calculated on the strength of the laudanum, for, before I reached the Post Office my reason was entirely gone, and the letter was never put in. Let me pass over — my darling *sister* — the awful horrors that succeeded. A friend was at hand, who aided, and (if it can be called saving) saved me, but it is only within the last three days that I have been able to remember what occurred in that dreary interval. It appears that, after the laudanum was rejected from the stomach, I became calm, and to a casual observer, sane — so that I was suffered to go back to Providence." [1]

[1] *Poe to "Annie," November 16, 1848.* Ingram, ii. 193, 194.

previous Saturday, which she distinctly ascribes to his having become intoxicated in Boston, refused to see him until noon, despite all the messages that he could invent. In the afternoon he again called, by appointment, and once more implored her to marry him at once and return with him to New York. He excused his excesses in Boston on the ground of his anxiety in respect to her decision, and on that and the following day continued to plead his cause with all his eloquent abandonment of language and manner. The details of the termination of this interview and of its consequences have been narrated by Mrs. Whitman herself with slight variations. The earliest account, so far as is known, is contained in a private letter of March, 1860. In this, after mentioning that Poe "had vehemently urged me to an immediate marriage," she continues as follows: —

"As an additional reason for *delaying* a marriage which, under any circumstances, seemed to all my friends full of evil portents, I read to him some passages from a letter which I had recently received from one of his New York associates. He seemed deeply pained and wounded by the result of our interview, and left me abruptly, saying that if we met again it would be as strangers. He passed the evening in the bar-room of his hotel, and after a night of delirious frenzy, returned the



next day to my mother's house in a state of great mental excitement and suffering, declaring that his welfare for time and eternity depended on me. A physician, Dr. O. H. Oakie, was sent for by my mother, who, perceiving indications of brain fever, advised his removal to the house of his friend W. J. Pabodie, of this city, where he was kindly cared for until his recovery."[1]

Later and possibly more accurate accounts change some of these details and amplify others. In the interview of November 8, according to these, Mrs. Whitman showed Poe several letters, one of which especially moved him; on reading it, further confidential conversation being prevented by visitors, he took leave at once with a look of strange excitement, and made no reply to her invitation, "We shall see you this evening?" He did not, however, return, but sent a note of renunciation. On the next day when Poe called, he was so uncontrollable that his passionate appeals rang through the house. "Never have I heard anything so awful," records Mrs. Whitman, "awful even to sublimity. It was long before I could nerve myself to see him. My mother was with him more than two hours before I entered the room. He hailed me as an angel sent to save him from perdition. . . . In the afternoon he grew more composed, and my mother sent for Dr. Oakie.'"[2]

In consequence of this pitiable exhibition of

[1] Mrs. Whitman to ——. MS.

[2] Ingram, ii. 176.

Poe's state, and with the hope of helping him in what seemed to be a last struggle for life itself, Mrs. Whitman consented within a few days to a conditional engagement. Forced to be content with this, Poe, having on his side repeated the promise of reform that he had given to every woman whom he had known intimately, returned to New York on November 14, and on the same evening wrote to assure his *fiancée* that he had not dared to break his pledge.

In spite, however, of his success in so difficult and indeed desperate a wooing, he felt little of the happiness of an accepted lover. He arrived at Fordham safely, but so changed in outward appearance by the wear of the last fortnight that Mrs. Clemm declares, in a letter to "Annie," written two days later, he was hardly recognizable. All the previous night, according to the same authority, he had raved about this last lady, and the same day, November 16, he also wrote to her a letter which is inexplicable on the theory that he put any faith in the happy issue of his betrothal, since after giving the account, already quoted, of his suicidal attempt at Boston, he proposes to take a cottage for his mother and himself at Westford, where he might see her family every day and herself often, and concludes with a passionate appeal that she would come on to Fordham at once, if only for a week, saying, "I am so *ill* — so terribly, hopelessly *ill* in body and mind, that I feel I *cannot*

live."[1] In his next letter, however, written four days later, to Edward Valentine, the brother of the first Mrs. Allan, and containing merely a request for the loan of $200 to start the "Stylus," he expresses a strong hope of surmounting his difficulties. On November 21, 22, and 24, and presumably on other dates, he wrote to Mrs. Whitman, warning her against his slanderers, particularly the women, begging her to be true to him, as his sole hope was in her love, and drawing golden anticipations of their worldly triumph. Meanwhile, on November 23, he had written to "Annie's" sister, already mentioned, in hardly less affectionate terms than to herself or Mrs. Whitman, protesting his love for "Annie" and imploring an answer to his former letter to the latter with a fervor amply indicated by a single line: "Her silence fills my whole soul with terror."[2]

With such conflicting and exhausting emotions, which happily have not been further disclosed by his confidants, Poe passed another fortnight. On December 20 he left Fordham to give the fifth lecture before the Franklin Lyceum of Providence. At the New York station he met a lady, who said to him, "Mr. Poe, are you going to Providence to be married?" "I am going," he replied, "to deliver a lecture on Poetry." Then he added, after a moment, "That marriage may never take place." His friend, Mr. Pabodie, in describing

[1] Ingram, ii. 194. [2] Ingram, ii. 196.

this interview, states that "circumstances existed which threatened to postpone the marriage indefinitely, if not altogether to prevent it."[1] To these, which have not been divulged, Poe presumably referred. On reaching Providence he delivered the lecture, "The Poetic Principle," the same evening, December 20, to a large audience. He remained in the city, and still pleaded with Mrs. Whitman to be married and to return with him to Fordham. He was stopping at the Earl House, and there occasionally drank at the bar with some young men of the city. On Friday evening, December 22, he called at Mrs. Whitman's, partially intoxicated; but, says Mr. Pabodie, who was present, he was quiet and said little. The next morning he was full of contrition and profuse of promises for the future, and he persuaded Mrs. Whitman to appoint Monday evening for the ceremony. He then wrote to Dr. Crocker, engaging him to officiate, and to Mrs. Clemm, advising her to expect himself and his wife on Tuesday at Fordham. In the afternoon, however, Mrs. Whitman received a note from a friend, informing her that Poe had that morning again drunk at the bar of his hotel, and she therefore finally decided to break off the match. When Poe called, says Mrs. Whitman, "no token of the infringement of his promise was visible in his appearance or manner."[2] This

[1] Pabodie to Griswold, June 11, 1852. Gill, 224.
[2] Ingram, ii. 184, 185.

some papers,' she says, "which he had intrusted to my keeping, I placed them in his hands without a word of explanation or reproach, and, utterly worn out and exhausted by the mental conflicts and anxieties and responsibilities of the last few days, I drenched my handkerchief with ether and threw myself on a sofa, hoping to lose myself in utter unconsciousness. Sinking on his knees beside me, he entreated me to speak to him, — to speak *one* word, but *one word*. At last I responded, almost inaudibly, 'What can I say?' 'Say that you love me, Helen.' '*I love you.*' These were the last words I ever spoke to him."[1] Mr. Pabodie, who had accompanied Poe on this visit, went with him to the train, in which he left at once for Fordham. About three weeks later he addressed a last letter to Mrs. Whitman, in respect to some slanderous misrepresentations of his conduct in this affair, which had been put in circulation; but to this, which he had first sent unsealed to "Annie," Mrs. Whitman made no reply, except, weeks afterward, indirectly by some "Stanzas for Music," published in "The Metropolitan" for February, and now included, in a revised version, in her "Poems" as "The Island of Dreams."

This episode has been narrated in minute detail because gross perversions of the facts were once

[1] Ingram, ii. 184, 185.



common, and are not yet entirely suppressed; and in the relation it has not been possible to ignore, as one would desire to do, the letters written by Poe, during this period, to Mrs. Whitman, "Annie," and her sister. If Poe's correspondence with other women — with Mrs. Osgood, for example, who terms his letters "divinely beautiful" — bore any resemblance to that of the last year of his life, fortune has been more than usually kind in destroying it. Not one word from these letters ought ever to have been published, but now it is too late to exclude them from the record. From this and other evidence it is plain that Poe, worn out by the ruin wrought on a romantic temperament by his unavailing struggle with poverty, insane indulgence, and secret disease, realizing now the hopelessness of his situation and oppressed by its loneliness, felt himself under an overpowering necessity of receiving human help, and sought for it with an ardor undisciplined by years, in whatever quarter there was any promise. He had made up his mind, moreover, to adopt Mrs. Shew's advice, and to try to save himself in what she had declared the only possible way, — marriage. A trivial incident — the anonymous exchange of a copy of verses — resulted in some slight relations between himself and a woman whose genius he had idealized, and he at once threw himself on her mercy. By his own declaration to Mrs. Whitman, hardly more than a week earlier he had been on the point of asking

an to be his wife. Mrs. Whitman
ithstanding her many virtues and ad-
ities of heart, so finely exercised in her
otion to Poe's memory, was eccentric,
o romantic fancies and mystical moods.
particular a believer in occult spiritual
nd by this approach to her weakness
s persuasive appeal. Both in his let-
nd in the recorded fragments of their
he rhapsodized about their affinities,
ere the sure chord to respond to his
may have believed in what he pro-
mid all his transcendental raptures, as
s vindication of his character and his
ipations of their worldly triumph, as
although his helplessness and real suf-
lain to see, it is futile to look for any
e expression of the love man bears to
passage that rings true with genuine
does the single brief note written to
ginia. In all this correspondence there
d absolute absorption of his mind in his
—his injuries, distresses, and hopes;
ne familiar with his modes of expression,
most an accident that these letters were
o Mrs. Whitman. The language, con-
ld studded with terms of endearment,
he habitually used both in written and
ds to other women who he thought un-
m. Clearly, so far as his need of sym-

pathy, pity, consolation, was concerned, he put more trust in "Annie's" heart, just as he wrote to her with more freedom and besought her aid with more simplicity. He had selected Mrs. Whitman as the object of his marital determination *out* of admiration for her poems, had asked her hand at the first interview, and, finding himself opposed by private defamation, had urged his suit with eagerness and force; but he apparently never believed he would succeed, and in this fear he pressed for a conclusion. In fact Poe seems less absorbed in a woman than infatuated with an idea, — an *idea* which, originating in fancy, fostered by his idealizing faculty, made practicable by accident, and acted on from impulse, was now supported by the strongest worldly motives, since his reputation, ambition, and fortune were highly interested in the issue.

Besides these considerations, it must be remembered how plain and frequent in both Poe's acts and words at this period are the signs of a mind unstrung. To give but one additional instance, in judging the following passage to Mrs. Whitman, the only choice lies between Poe's insincerity or his practical insanity: —

"Was I right, dearest Helen, in my first impression of you? — you know I have implicit faith in first impressions — was I right in the impression that you are ambitious? If so, and *if you will have faith in me*, I can and will satisfy your wildest desires. It would be a

glorious triumph, Helen, for *us* — for *you and me*. I dare not trust my schemes to a letter — nor indeed have I time even to hint at them here. When I see you I will explain all — as far, at least, as I dare explain *all* my hopes even to you. Would it *not* be 'glorious,' darling, to establish in America, the sole unquestionable aristocracy — that of intellect — to secure its supremacy — to lead and to control it? All this I can do, Helen, and will — if you bid me — and aid me." [1]

This, in the case of a man of Poe's years and powers, is either chicanery or irresponsible maundering. He merely let his pen run, as in nearly all these letters, which, to characterize them plainly, record the confusion and weakness of a mind abandoned to an emotional mood, and occupied only by self-pity, intellectual pride, or despair. That he has been thus revealed to the world in his weakest moments and most wretched abasement is the fault of his friends; but keeping in view his state of mind and body, the origin and course of his wooing, and the surrounding circumstances, one finds it least difficult to believe that if Poe was sincere in his professions he was self-deceived, and to agree with Mrs. Osgood, who, having herself been the object of similar sentiments from him, declared of his dead wife, "I believe she was the only woman whom he ever truly loved." [2]

[1] Poe to Mrs. Whitman, November 22, 1848. Ingram, ii. 180, 181.

[2] Griswold, lili.

On reaching Fordham Poe found Mrs. Clemm, who had never favored the match, overjoyed to see him unaccompanied by a wife, and, were it possible, more devoted to himself. He set to work, and wrote several hours each day; but, in consonance with the view that has been taken, although doubtless bitterly aggrieved, he exhibited no regret at the event which he had always considered likely, and no fidelity to the woman whose loyalty to his memory in after years was almost ideal. On January 11, 1849, he wrote to "Annie" as follows: —

"In spite of so many worldly sorrows — in spite of all the trouble and *misrepresentation* (so hard to bear) that Poverty has entailed on me for so long a time — in spite of *all* this — I am *so, so* happy. . . . I need not tell you how *great a burden is taken off my heart by my rupture* with Mrs. W.; for I have fully made up my mind to break the engagement. . . . *Nothing* would have deterred me from the match but — what I tell you." [1]

Two weeks later he inclosed to the same correspondent a last letter to Mrs. Whitman, in which, after referring to the evil reports of him originating at Providence, he declared, "No amount of provocation shall induce me to speak ill of *you* [Mrs. Whitman], even in my own defense," [2] — with directions to read it, seal it with wax, and mail it in Boston; and to this singularly indelicate act, which is exceeded only by the circumstance that

[1] Ingram, ii. 202. [2] Ingram, ii. 185.

"Annie's" confidence in him had been shaken by these same slanders, he added the dishonor of a hasty expression of his pique in words too violently in contrast with the line just quoted to escape notice.

"Of one thing rest assured, from this day forth I shun the pestilential society of *literary women*. They are a heartless, unnatural, venomous, dishonorable *set*, with no guiding principle but inordinate self-esteem. Mrs. Osgood is the *only* exception I know." [1]

Having thus freed himself of the affair, — for it is said that Mrs. Whitman's name never afterwards passed his lips, — Poe busied himself with literature, which, he wrote to Thomas, there was no seducing him from; and he adds, "Nor would I abandon the hopes that still lead me on for all the gold in California." [2] In the "Southern Literary Messenger" for February he published an unfavorable review of Lowell's "A Fable for Critics," and in "Godey's" of the same month "Mellonta Tauta," a revision of the introduction to "Eureka." He sent, but fruitlessly, "Landor's Cottage" to the "Metropolitan," whose short career was distinguished by some lines addressed to him by Mrs. Osgood, and also by Mrs. Whitman in indirect acknowledgment of his last letter; and with like ill success fifty pages of "Marginalia" (possibly the editor had discovered their second-hand character)

[1] Ingram, ii. 205.

[2] Poe to Thomas, February 14, 1849. MS. copy

to the "Messenger," and "Critics and Criticism" to the "Whig." Poe was elated with his immediate prospects; and he had good reason, if there was no exaggeration in his statement that he had made permanent engagements with every magazine in America (except Peterson's "National"), including a Cincinnati magazine called the "Gentlemen's," at a minimum price of five dollars per Graham page. On February 6 he finished "The Bells," presumably the second draft, and the next day "Hop-Frog," a tale of grotesque humor out of Berner's Froissart, published in April in the "Flag of our Union," a Boston weekly. His only other publications that have been traced were the ghoulish lines "To Annie" (reprinted by Willis) and the sonnet "To my Mother," both in the same cheap Boston weekly, and, as it would seem, in April; and lastly, in "Sartain's Magazine" for March, "A Valentine," the anagrammatic poem to Mrs. Osgood. Perhaps "El Dorado," the only poem of which the first publication is unknown, belongs to this same period.

These various writings probably represent Poe's literary activity for some time before this spring, and this is certainly the case with the only noticeable pieces among them, "The Domain of Arnheim" and "Landor's Cottage," called its pendant. The latter closed the series of the landscape studies, which make as distinct a group in Poe's imaginative work as the tales of mystery, ratiocination, or con-

science, since in these the sensuous element, which was primary in his genius, found its simplest and most unrestrained expression. The series had culminated, however, in "The Domain of Arnheim," in which the brilliancy and flood and glow of pure color are a mere reveling of the æsthetic sense; and so gorgeous is the vision and thrown out in so broad an expanse that, although only a description, the piece is as unique among works of imagination as is "The Black Cat" or "The Fall of the House of Usher." The landscape that the mention of the latter recalls, and much more the spectral woodland and tarn of "Ulalume," serve to measure by momentary contrast with the scenes of faëry in "Arnheim" the range of Poe's fantasy, and at the same time to bring out strongly the extent to which his work is dependent for its effect directly on the senses, however abnormally excited. In fact the impression made in the present case is solely spectacular. The landscape sketches, too, which belong to the dark period of Poe's career, afford some pleasant relief to the paltrinesses, the miseries, and debasements of his ordinary life. The idyllic sweetness of "Eleonora," the quiet beauty of "The Island of the Fay" and "Morning on the Wissahicon," opened round Poe, as he was seen in his Philadelphia days, the only prospect beyond the mean walls of the newspaper office and the tenement house. Now in his yet more wretched years he was not deprived of his poet's birthright in the in-

heritance of nature; rather, as in this mythical "Arnheim," he indulged most purely his delight in the contemplation of loveliness for its own sake; and as he imagined the charming cottage of Landor just at the time when his letters exhibit him in his lowest spirits, it would seem that his country rambles still gave him an outlook on the things of beauty, of light and calm and joy. No life can continue in darkness and turmoil such as these past months would have been, had they been filled only with the incidents and passions of the written story. Of the bursts of sunshine and pauses of calm that checkered this portion of Poe's days, of the afternoons and frequent nights of summer whose beauty he drank in with senses dulled only by the lotus-flower, these landscape studies are the open secret.

While Poe was thus engaged a second female foe had arisen in the home of his Lowell friends in the person of a woman who had helped to relieve his necessities in 1847. She busied herself so successfully with disseminating the current slanders respecting him as to disturb the minds of the family, and to alienate, at least partially, the good-will of the head of the house. Poe, on being informed of this new misfortune, accounted for the gossip's hostility by saying that he had left her abruptly in consequence of her disparagement of "Annie," and added that he thought it hard that such a quarrel should prejudice him in the latter's mind. He was so far moved by the attitude

assumed by her husband that he gave up a proposed visit to his house and the plan of settling near these new friends permanently, and he even professed to think it necessary that the correspondence should cease. He wrote, "I cannot and *will* not have it on my conscience that I have interfered with the domestic happiness of the only being in the whole world, whom I have loved at the same time with truth and with purity."[1]

Such an abrupt termination to one of the happiest friendships of his life was fortunately avoided. Poe was able to sustain his story, and after a few weeks the tale bearer, whose connection with his family seems to have been unbroken, wrote to him that she was about to publish a novel recording their relations in detail in such a way as to make his own character appear noble and generous, and that she would come on to Fordham at once to avail herself of any suggestions from him. What became of this novel, or what reception the lady's proposals met with, is unknown; but as in the sequel, even after Poe's death, she still busied herself in scandal, it is likely that there was no reconciliation.

In literary matters the spring had brought disappointment. The "Columbia" and "Union" failed; the "Whig" and "Democratic" stopped payment; the "Messenger," which was in Poe's debt, remained in arrears; another publication, with which he had engaged for ten dollars weekly,

[1] Poe to "Annie," February 19, 1849. Ingram, ii. 208.

was forced to decline contributions; with "Godey's" he had quarreled: and so, in his own words, he was "reduced to 'Sartain' and 'Graham,' both very precarious." His many engagements, on which he had built so hopefully a few months before, had dwindled away; and to add to his misfortunes he had again been seriously ill. "I thought," wrote Mrs. Clemm to "Annie," "he would die several times. God knows I wish we were both in our graves. It would, I am sure, be far better."[1] A deep gloom settled over his mind. He himself wrote to the same lady, in denying that this arose from his literary disappointments, — "My sadness is *unaccountable*, and this makes me the more sad. I am full of dark forebodings. *Nothing* cheers or comforts me. My life seems wasted — the future looks a dreary blank; but I will struggle on and 'hope against hope.'"[2] After this he visited his friends at Lowell, apparently in May, and there wrote the third draft of "The Bells;" he soon returned to New York, with the expectation of going South at once to try once more the old scheme, — the establishment of the "Stylus," for which he was now arranging a partnership with a Mr. Patterson, in accordance with which it would be published simultaneously in New York and St. Louis on January 1, 1850. He was delayed for some weeks, during which his despondency was marked and habitual. Before leaving Fordham, apparently led by

[1] Ingram, ii. 215. [2] Ingram, ii. 214.

his works, and that Willis would write such a biographical notice as should be deemed necessary. On June 29, having completed his arrangements for his journey, he went to New York in company with Mrs. Clemm, to pass the night at the house of Mrs. Lewis, the poetess, whose works he had lately reviewed, and with whom during the past year an intimacy of the old kind had sprung up. "He seemed very sad," wrote this lady, "and retired early. On leaving the next morning he took my hand in his, and, looking in my face, said, 'Dear Stella, my much beloved friend. You truly understand and appreciate me — I have a presentiment that I shall never see you again. I must leave today for Richmond. If I never return, write my life. You can and will do me justice.'"[1] Mrs. Clemm accompanied him to the steamboat, and on parting he said to her, "God bless you, my own darling mother. Do not fear for Eddy! See how good I will be while I am away from you, and will [*sic*] come back to love and comfort you."[2]

Poe stopped at Philadelphia, where he suffered a severe attack of *delirium tremens*, during which he was taken care of by Mr. John Sartain, the proprietor of Sartain's Magazine, who still remembers the visions about which he raved and the persistence with which he besought him for laudanum.

[1] Ingram, ii. 220. [2] Ingram, ii. 221.

On recovering he proceeded to Richmond and there remained through July, August, and September, delivered his lecture on "The Poetic Principle," in Richmond and Norfolk, canvassed for the "Stylus," and enjoyed the society of his old and new friends. He stayed at the Madison Tavern, a once fashionable but then decayed hotel, and he visited much among his acquaintances, by whom he was well received, and, indeed, lionized. At Duncan's Lodge, especially, the residence of the Mackenzies, who had adopted his sister Rosalie, he was made at home; and at Robert Sully's, the artist whom he had befriended in his early schooldays, and at Mrs. Talley's, he passed many of those hours which he said were the happiest he had known for years. To Miss Susan Archer Talley, now Mrs. Weiss, who then looked on Poe with the romantic interest of a young poetess as well as with a woman's sympathy with sadness so confessed as his, is due the most life-like and detailed portrait of him that exists. Erect in stature, cold, impassive, almost haughty in manner, soberly and fastidiously clad in black, to a stranger's eye he wore a look of distinction rather than beauty; on nearer approach one was more struck by the strongly marked head, with the broad brow, the black curly hair brushed back, the pallid, careworn, and in repose the somewhat haggard features, while beneath the concealment of a short black moustache one saw the slight habitual contraction of the mouth and occasionally the quick,

almost imperceptible curl of the upper lip in scorn — a sneer, it is said, that was easily excited; but the physical fascination of the man was felt, at last, to lie in his eyes, large, jet-black, with a steel-gray iris, clear as crystal, restless, ever expanding and contracting as, responsive with intelligence and emotion, they beat their full, open, steady, unshrinking gaze from under the long black lashes that shaded them. On meeting his friends Poe's face would brighten with pleasure, his features lost the worn look and his reserve its coldness; to men he was cordial, to women he showed a deference that seems always to have suggested a reminiscence of chivalry; and in society with the young he forgot his melancholy, listened with amusement, or joined in their repartees with evident pleasure, though he would soon leave them for a seat in the portico, or a walk in the grounds with a single friend. To the eyes of his young girlish friend he seemed invariably cheerful, and often even playful in mood. Once only was he noticeably cast down; it was when visiting the old deserted Mayo place, called The Hermitage, where he used to go frequently in his youth, and the scene was so picturesque that it is worth giving at length: —

"On reaching the place our party separated, and Poe and myself strolled slowly about the grounds. I observed that he was unusually silent and preoccupied, and, attributing it to the influence of memories associated with the place, forbore to interrupt him. He passed slowly

by the mossy bench called the 'lovers' seat,' beneath two aged trees, and remarked, as we turned toward the garden, 'There used to be white violets here.' Searching amid the tangled wilderness of shrubs, we found a few late blossoms, some of which he placed carefully between the leaves of a note-book. Entering the deserted house, he passed from room to room with a grave, abstracted look, and removed his hat, as if involuntarily, on entering the saloon, where in old times many a brilliant company had assembled. Seated in one of the deep windows, over which now grew masses of ivy, his memory must have borne him back to former scenes, for he repeated the familiar lines of Moore: —

> 'I feel like one
> Who treads alone
> Some banquet hall deserted,'

and paused, with the first expression of real sadness that I had ever seen on his face. The light of the setting sun shone through the drooping ivy-boughs into the ghostly room, and the tattered and mildewed paper-hangings, with their faded tracery of rose-garlands, waved fitfully in the autumn breeze. An inexpressibly eerie feeling came over me, which I can even now recall, and as I stood there, my old childish idea of the poet as a spirit of mingled light and darkness recurred strongly to my imagination." [1]

Poe talked with his young friend about his plans and hopes; about the restrictions on criticism which are imposed by personal friendship and editorial prepossessions, and from which even he could not wholly

[1] *Scribner's Magazine*, xv. 5, p. 712 (March, 1878).

free himself; about his New York friends, the misconstructions his nature suffered under even among those who knew him, and other confidential topics that the charm of his listener and his own readiness to indulge in quick intimacies, beguiled him into. In particular it should be noticed that he showed her a letter from Griswold, accepting his commission to edit his works in case of his sudden death.

These reminiscences of quiet mornings in the grounds of Duncan's Lodge and of social evenings at the houses of various friends do not contain the whole story of this summer. Twice during this visit, it is said, Poe again suffered severe illness in consequence of intemperance, and though he recovered under kind and skillful care, he was told by his physician, Dr. Carter, that another such indulgence would probably prove fatal; and in the course of a long conversation in which Poe was moved to tears he convinced this gentleman of his earnest desire to overcome his temptations and of his unavailing struggle against them, though he had still, it seems, courage to keep up hope for the last trial.

During these months, too, he renewed his attentions to Mrs. Shelton and asked her hand in marriage. There is no room to doubt that in this act he obeyed worldly motives; for though there had been romantic passages between them in schooldays, there is no likelihood that these would have prevailed on Poe to unite himself with a woman who is described as of plain manners, older than himself,

and with no attraction except wealth. It cannot have escaped attention that Poe uniformly attributed his ill-success in the world solely to his poverty; in later years especially this had become so settled a conviction in his mind that in his letters to "Annie," "I must get rich, get rich," is a refrain so constant as to seem the purpose he had most at heart; he needed money to secure his shattered health against the necessities of hard labor for a support precarious at best, and especially to establish the "Stylus," the scheme he pursued as a phantom. Mrs. Clemm believed that his motive was to provide a home and friends for herself. To her Mrs. Whitman wrote, "I think I can understand all the motives that influenced Edgar in those last days and can see how the desire to provide a home and friends for you, swayed him in *all*."[1] His engagement to Mrs. Shelton was commonly talked of, and is said to have been mentioned in the papers, greatly to his displeasure; and although Mrs. Shelton has denied that a formal agreement existed, and acknowledges only a partial understanding, she began a correspondence with Mrs. Clemm the first letter[2] of which is not to be explained on any other theory than that she meant to marry Poe. The most authentic indication of the actual state of affairs is Poe's letter to Mrs. Clemm, September

[1] Mrs. Whitman to Mrs. Clemm, April 17, 1859. MS.

[2] This letter, of which the author has a copy, is too private for publication.

18, 1849, in which, it will be noticed, his peculiar secretiveness is markedly illustrated by his directing her to address him under a fictitious name in Philadelphia.

[Richmond, Va.
Tuesday, *September* 18, '49.

My own Darling Muddy,

On arriving here last night from Norfolk I received both your letters, including Mrs. Lewis's. I cannot tell you the joy they gave me to learn at least that you are well and hopeful. May God forever bless you, my *dear dear* Muddy. — Elmira has just got home from the country. I spent last evening with her. I think she loves me more devotedly than any one I ever knew and I cannot help loving her in return. Nothing is as yet definitely settled —] and it will not do to hurry matters. I lectured at Norfolk on Monday and cleared enough to settle my bill here at the Madison House with $2 over. I had a highly fashionable audience, but Norfolk is a small place and there were two exhibitions the same night. Next Monday I lecture again here and expect to have a large audience. On Tuesday I start for Philadelphia to attend to Mrs. Loud's poems — and *possibly* on Thursday I may start for New York. If I do I will go straight over to Mrs. Lewis's and send for you. It will be better for me not to go to Fordham — don't you think so? Write immediately in reply and direct to Philadelphia. For fear I should not get the letter sign no name and address it to *E. S. T. Grey Esq^re^*. *If possible* I will get married before I start, but there is no telling. Give my dearest love to Mrs. L. My poor poor Muddy I am still unable to send you even one

dollar, — but keep [up heart — I hope that our troubles are nearly over. I saw John Beatty in Norfolk.

God bless and protect you, my own darling Muddy. I showed your letter to Elmira, and she says "it is such a darling precious lotter that she loves you for it already."

Your own Eddy.

Don't forgot to write immediately to Philadelphia so that your letter will be there when I arrive.

The papers here are praising me to death — and I have been received everywhere with enthusiasm. Be sure and preserve all the printed scraps I have] sent you and keep up my file of the Literary World.[1]

It has been stated that a disagreement arose between Poe and Mrs. Shelton in consequence of her expressed intention of keeping control of her property, and that he refused to give up her letters to him unless she would first surrender his; and this circumstance is alleged to be the basis of the scandalous story still circulated respecting Poe's levying blackmail on a woman and being beaten by her brother. Of the truth of this at any time in his life, there is no indication. Neither is there any evidence that any difference arose between the two at all. Poe is said to have himself written to Mrs. Clemm that the ceremony was fixed for October 17.[2] On any other supposition than that a practical engagement still existed, it is inexplicable that after Poe's death Mrs. Shelton should have gone

[1] Poe to Mrs. Clemm, MS.; where bracketed, MS. copy.

[2] Didier, 116.

into mourning, as she did, or have written a letter of condolence to Mrs. Clemm, with whom she had no acquaintance, of such a character that the latter should have written to "Annie" regarding it, "I have received a letter from poor Elmira; oh, how you will pity her when you read it!"[1] Moreover, Poe's statement to his mother-in-law agrees with his promise to his friends at Richmond that he would return within two weeks, and with his expressed intention to reside thereafter in that city, although this would necessarily involve the abandonment of his plan in respect to the "Stylus," which his present partner in the enterprise, Mr. E. H. N. Patterson, in a letter dated August 21, proposed to issue, according to the plan, simultaneously in New York and St. Louis, on July 1, 1850.

In order to wind up his affairs in New York and to bring Mrs. Clemm to Richmond, as preliminaries of this marriage, Poe decided to go North. On the day before leaving, probably Saturday, September 29, he passed the evening at Mrs. Talley's, where he had a long conversation with her daughter, in which he spoke of his future, "seeming to anticipate it with eager delight, like that of youth," and, Mrs. Weiss adds, "he declared that the last few weeks in the society of his old and new friends had been the happiest that he had known for many years, and that when he again left New York he

[1] Mrs. Clemm to "Annie," October 17, 1849. Ingram, ii. 241.

should there leave behind all the trouble and vexation of his past life." [1] That night he spent with his friends at Duncan's Lodge, and sat late at his window, smoking and silent. The next day he passed in the city with some male friends, and late in the evening left Dr. Carter's office to take supper across the street, at Sadler's restaurant. There he met some acquaintances, who kept company with him until very late and then accompanied him to the boat, where they left him sober and cheerful. If, as seems probable, this was on Sunday night, he would have arrived in Baltimore late on Monday or early Tuesday. All that is known of his movements is that he called at Dr. N. C. Brooks's on an afternoon, partially intoxicated, and, not finding his friend, went away. It is reported, too, that he took the train to Philadelphia, but, being in the wrong car, was brought back from Havre de Grace in a state of stupor. On what foundation this story rests cannot now be determined. It is also said that he dined with some old military friends, became intoxicated, and while in that state was captured by politicians, who kept him stupefied, and made him vote at several places on Wednesday, election day. The basis of this tradition, too, is now lost. The only certain event after his call on Brooks, which, according to the hypothesis here made, was on Tuesday, is that on Wednesday, at some time after noon, he was recognized at

[1] Scribner's Magazine, xv. 5, p. 713 (March, 1878).

one of the rum-shops used for voting, Ryan's Fourth Ward Polls, by a printer, who wrote the following note: —

BALTIMORE CITY, *Oct.* 3, 1849.

There is a gentleman, rather the worse for wear, at Ryan's Fourth Ward Polls, who goes under the cognomen of Edgar A. Poe, and who appears in great distress. He says he is acquainted with you, and I assure you he is in need of immediate assistance.

JOSEPH W. WILSON.

To DR. J. E. SNODGRASS.[1]

Dr. Snodgrass called at Ryan's and had Poe taken to the Washington Hospital, where he was admitted, unconscious, at 5 P. M.; his relatives in the city were notified of his condition, and gave him such attention as was possible. He remained, except for a brief interval, in an alarming delirium, and on Sunday, about five o'clock, he died. The story of these last days, the catastrophe of "the motley drama," taken from contemporary documents, is as follows: —

BALTIMORE CITY MARINE HOSPITAL,
November 15, '49.

MRS. CLEMM,

MY DEAR MADAM,

I take the earliest opportunity of responding to yours of the 9th inst., which came to hand by yesterday's mail.

. . . . . .

[1] *N. Y. Herald*, March 27, 1881.

But now for the required intelligence. Presuming you are already aware of the malady of which Mr. Poe died, I need only state concisely the particulars of his circumstances from his entrance until his decease.

When brought to the Hospital he was unconscious of his condition — who brought him or with whom he had been associating. He remained in this condition from five o'clock in the afternoon — the hour of his admission — until three next morning. This was on the 3d October.

To this state succeeded tremor of the limbs, and at first a busy but not violent or active delirium — constant talking — and vacant converse with spectral and imaginary objects on the walls. His face was pale and his whole person drenched in perspiration. We were unable to induce tranquillity before the second day after his admission.

Having left orders with the nurses to that effect, I was summoned to his bedside so soon as consciousness supervened, and questioned him in reference to his family, place of residence, relatives, etc. But his answers were incoherent and unsatisfactory. He told me however, he had a wife in Richmond (which I have since learned was not the fact), that he did not know when he left that city or what had become of his trunk of clothing. Wishing to rally and sustain his now fast sinking hopes, I told him I hoped that in a few days he would be able to enjoy the society of his friends here and I would be most happy to contribute in every possible way to his ease and comfort. At this he broke out with much energy, and said the best thing his best friend could do would be to blow out his brains with a pistol

— that when he beheld his degradation he was ready to sink into the earth," etc." Shortly after giving expression to these words Mr. Poe seemed to doze, and I left him for a short time. When I returned I found him in a violent delirium, resisting the efforts of two nurses to keep him in bed. This state continued until Saturday evening (he was admitted on Wednesday), when he commenced calling for one "Reynolds," which he did through the night until *three* on Sunday morning. At this time a very decided change began to affect him. Having become enfeebled from exertion he became quiet and seemed to rest for a short time; then gently moving his head, he said, "*Lord help my poor soul*," and expired!

This, Madam, is as faithful an account as I am able to furnish from the Record of his case.

. . . . . .

His remains were visited by some of the first individuals of the city, many of them anxious to have a lock of his hair.

. . . . . .

Respectfully yours,

J. J. MORAN, *Res. Phys.*[1]

The undistinguished funeral took place on Monday, October 8, and three days later Neilson Poe wrote an account of it to Mrs. Clemm: —

[1] Moran to Mrs. Clemm, MS. The omitted portions are of no interest. The different dates and additional circumstances given many years afterward by Dr. Moran, *must* give way to the statements here made when the event was fresh in his memory.

BALTIMORE, *October* 11, 1849.

MY DEAR MADAM:

. . . . . .

He died on Sunday morning, about five o'clock, at the Washington Medical College, where he had been since the Wednesday preceding. At what time he arrived in this city, where he spent the time he was here, or under what circumstances, I have been unable to ascertain. It appears that on Wednesday he was seen and recognized at one of the places of election in old town, and that his condition was such as to render it necessary to send him to the College, where he was tenderly nursed until the time of his death. As soon as I heard that he was at the College I went over; but his physician did not think it advisable that I should see him, as he was very excitable. The next day I called, and sent him changes of linen etc., and was gratified to learn that he was much better, and I was never so much shocked, in my life, as when, on Sunday morning, notice was sent me that he was dead. Mr. Herring and myself immediately took the necessary steps for his funeral, which took place on Monday afternoon at four o'clock. . . . The body was followed to the grave by Mr. Herring, Dr. Snodgrass, Mr. Z. Collins Lee (an old classmate) and myself. The service was performed by the Rev. William T. D. Clemm, a son of James S. Clemm. Mr. Herring and myself have sought, in vain, for the trunk and clothes of Edgar — there is reason to believe that he was robbed of them, whilst in such a condition as to render him insensible of his loss. . . .

Truly your friend and servant, NEILSON POE.

MRS. MARIA CLEMM.[1]

[1] Neilson Poe to Mrs. Clemm. MS. The omitted portions are of no interest.

Shortly after
were published
copies. To me
case, "Annabel
his ballads, app
"The Bells," t
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Shortly after Poe's death his remaining writings were published by the editors or friends who had copies. To mention only the first issue in each case, "Annabel Lee," the simplest and sweetest of his ballads, appeared in the New York "Tribune," "The Bells," that wonderful onomatopoetic experiment, in "Sartain's" for November, an essay "On Critics and Criticism" in "Graham's" for January, 1850, and in October following, "The Poetic Principle" in "Sartain's." The press had few notices of his loss; and, had it not been for the intense energy of Griswold's delineation of him in the "Tribune," a piece of writing that has the power of genius and cannot be forgotten while his memory lives, there would have been little to mark his death in contemporary papers. In consequence of this attack, however, Willis made a kind defense of his friend in the "Home Journal." Notwithstanding this incidental proof of Griswold's temper and predisposition toward Poe, the latter's papers, which contained ample materials for a biography, were put into his hands. After having edited two volumes of Poe's Works, Griswold prefixed his notorious memoir to the third volume, and at a later time published the fourth and last volume. The editing was poorly done, and in consequence there is at present no accurate or complete edition of Poe's works, since later editors have taken Griswold's work as a basis. The memoir aroused a stormy discussion; the poet's friends, Wilmer, Neal,

and Graham, had already come to his defense; and since then many others of his acquaintances have come forward from time to time to tell whatever good they knew of him, so that there is at present no fund of personal reminiscence about any other American man of letters that can compare in fullness, detail, and variety with that regarding Poe.

The story that has now been told, in which has been substantially incorporated whatever knowledge of Poe was accessible, has shown, it is hoped, the folly of any summary view of his character. Where the fault lay those who are bold to take the scales of justice may determine; the simple fact is that Poe, being highly endowed, well-bred, and educated better than his fellows, had more than once fair opportunities, brilliant prospects, and groups of benevolent, considerate, and active friends, and repeatedly forfeited prosperity and even the homely honor of an honest name. He ate opium and drank liquor; whatever was the cause, these were instruments of his ruin, and before half his years were run they had done their work with terrible thoroughness — he was a broken man. He died under circumstances of exceptional ugliness, misery, and pity, but not accidentally, for the end and the manner of it were clearly near and inevitable. He left a fame destined to long memory, and about it has grown up an idealized legend, the elements of which are not far to seek; but in the first lines of the literary history of a young nation, the

truth is better than a lie, however gilded, and in the case of genius, that so easily gathers romantic power over the heart and wins its devotion, candor is a social virtue. On the roll of our literature Poe's name is inscribed with the few foremost, and in the world at large his genius is established as valid among all men. Much as he derived nurture from other sources he was the son of Coleridge by the weird touch in his imagination, by the principles of his analytic criticism, and the speculative bent of his mind. An artist primarily, whose skill, helped by the finest sensitive and perceptive powers in himself, was developed by thought, patience, and endless self-correction into a subtle deftness of hand unsurpassed in its own work, he belonged to the men of culture instead of those of originally perfect power; but being gifted with the dreaming instinct, the myth-making faculty, the allegorizing power, and with no other poetic element of high genius, he exercised his art in a region of vague feeling, symbolic ideas, and fantastic imagery, and wrought his spell largely through sensuous effects of color, sound, and gloom, heightened by lurking but unshaped suggestions of mysterious meanings. Now and then gleams of light and stretches of lovely landscape shine out, but for the most part his mastery was over dismal, superstitious, and waste places. In imagination, as in action, his was an evil genius; and in its realms of revery he dwelt alone. Except the wife who idol-

ized him and the mother who cared for him, no one touched his heart in the years of his manhood, and at no time was love so strong in him as to rule his life; as he was self-indulgent, he was self-absorbed, and outside of his family no kind act, no noble affection, no generous sacrifice is recorded of him. Many men, it is true, held him in kind regard, and many women, subjected by his romantic sentiment, remained loyal to his memory; but these winning attractions never overcame the subtle power within that made him unable to establish a natural human relation, to keep continuously on living terms with any one, except the inmates of his family. Solitary as he was, proud and selfish, how could he kindle his works with the vital interest of humanity? Other interests they have, but not this crowning one which is the supreme excellence of the works of men. Thus ever more remote from mankind ran the currents of his life and genius, interminably commingling, until their twin streams, glassing at last the desolation they had so often prophetically imaged, choked and stagnant in midway of their course, sank into the waste. The pitiful justice of Poe's fate, the dark immortality of his fame, were accomplished.

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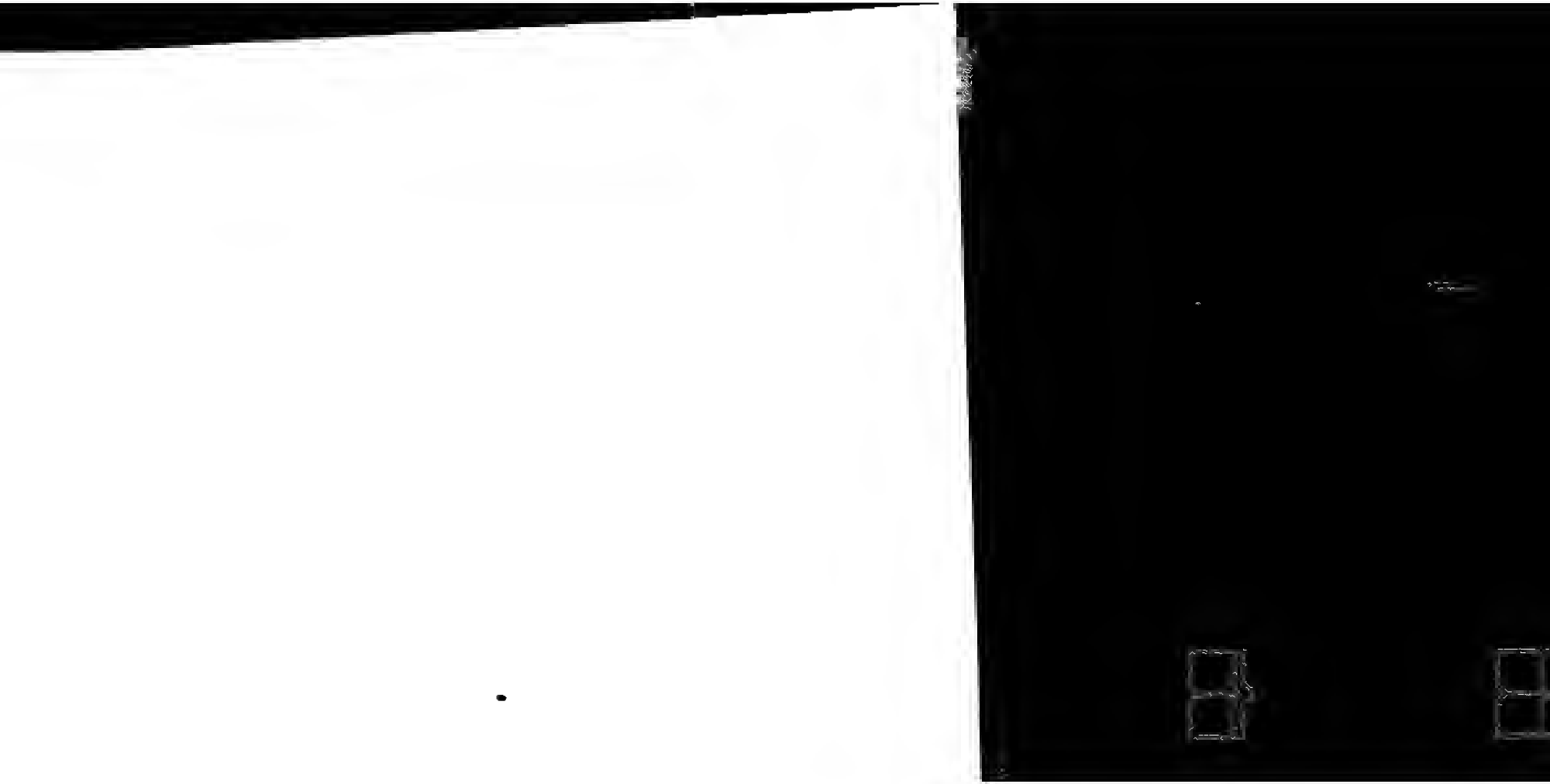
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